

Bitter Sweet

\$1.50

Vol. Seven, No. Ten

October, 1984



Island in Fog by Juanita Perkins

New England's Ghost Hunter
Old-time Fair Time Photos
Duncan Howlett and S.W.O.A.M.
John Greenleaf Whittier



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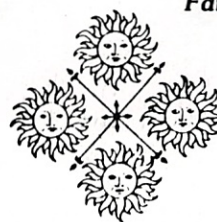
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BitterSweet Views for October

It is an irony that Autumn seems to be a season of rebirth for so many people—me included. I think it must be the crisp blueness of the air, the cool nights and dry days, the colors everywhere. Look at them, the beautiful leaves. On this page, Myron Hoyt's photograph leaves me with an intense experience of the colors of fall. (There are more of his photos in the center spread.)

Writing is such a personal experience. Done well, it is an intense personal experience. Recently, I had the good fortune to meet a room full of writers at the State of Maine Writers' Conference in Ocean Park. I spoke to them and they listened intently, giving me the honor of experiencing with me a lovely ocean-scented day and some thoughts on writing.

The summer of 1984 was a time of meeting many new writers—the best way possible, through their writing. Well over 400 pieces of new writing filled BitterSweet's mailbox and took most of my humid, hot days. There was good writing and bad writing, and writing that was totally inappropriate to a rural New England publication. Contained within that flood were the seeds of next year's magazine. Also there was the inspiration for some advice to fledgling and experienced writers alike. I would like to share that advice with you this month.

BitterSweet needs its contributors to survive; any magazine does. Inasmuch as we don't have a full-time paid staff, we need it more than most. If you are one of the writers who sent work to us this summer, I would like to say: be patient. The flood takes a long time to clean up. I am still reading and making decisions on that material.

Patience is the best admonition I can give to writers. If you are impatient, you should not be writing for publication. Magazines are apt to receive in one *week* enough material for an entire *month's* issue. You are sending me summer material; I am currently preparing December and January and February issues. Summer material may have to wait six months or more. In most cases, we will notify you long before that time. But the reality is, some material must stay in a magazine's files for

many, many months. That's the most important thing I wish that writers knew.

Secondly, I hope that you will follow some of the basic rules of submission when you write. Send good copies or stories typed on 8½ x 11, sturdy bond (not erasable), with good, *black* ink, so that it is legible. Send a stamped S.A.S.E.; please *don't* send stamps clipped to your manuscript. You do not have to send a synopsis of the story or a cover letter which explains your entire life's history. You should not send pictures when you submit a story on speculation; send good photocopies and we will get the pictures from you when we are ready to print.

The above advice does not hold, obviously, when it is photography that you wish to sell. In that case, black and white glossies of 5x7 or 8x10 size are far preferable to Instamatic-like photographs—but if that is all we can get, we will use them. The color that we print comes almost solely from transparencies (slides).

Some of the best material we have ever received was from people who don't consider themselves "writers." If you have never written before, don't let that stop you. Try your best to have accurate facts and good spelling; we can take care of the rest if the story is interesting. Take the time to edit and re-write your own material

before you send it. Stories dashed off the top of your head seldom sell. Take the time also to *describe* your setting well. Don't be too ordinary, but don't be too high-falutin' either.

We don't need (or like) fancy folders surrounding your work. Do make sure that your S.A.S.E. *fits* the manuscript, though. Let us know if you are submitting your story elsewhere, too. Most importantly, don't worry if you don't hear right away (and don't nag!) Usually, that means we are giving it more than a cursory glance. Rejections come back fairly soon!

The best advice I can give you, though, is not to take rejection *too* seriously. It doesn't necessarily mean that your piece is bad; it may just mean that we have used (or are about to use) something very similar. If you feel that your writing is not



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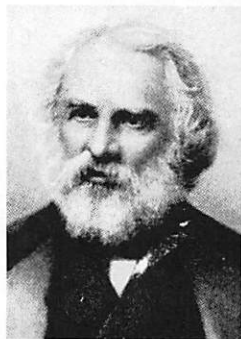
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Cover: Island in Fog. Taken in Bridgton, Maine, by Juanita Perkins of Lovell.



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



John Greenleaf Whittier

Ayah letters to the editor

LONGFELLOW & WHITTIER

My first exposure to BitterSweet was the June issue and I was greatly impressed with Jack C. Barnes' story of Longfellow.

Although a 1929 national newspaper poll gave first place to Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," when I entered school in 1928, Henry W. Longfellow's world where hard work—a great deal of it—could be justified by achievement was already passing away and being replaced by realism, speculation and sweep of action whose outcome no man/woman could foresee.

But in the one room schoolhouses where I spent my first two school years, Longfellow and John Greenleaf Whittier were still popular. Furthermore, I was fortunate enough, when I was eight, to be friends with a girl of 12 who was intensely interested in both Longfellow and Whittier. She often read and explained to me their poems from the "Riverside Literature Series."

In the late summer of 1930, I went to live with a great aunt in Haverhill, Mass., about seven miles from Whittier's birthplace. Patriot's Day, 1931, was spent in Boston where I visited the Old North Church that Longfellow made famous in his "Paul Revere's Ride."

It has been said that Longfellow was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and William J. Long said of the poet, he "knew only one side of life... For him, with his serene outlook, there were not nine Muses, but only three, and their names were Faith, Hope, and Charity."

Longfellow certainly escaped the back breaking labor of such men as Whittier whose chores included milking seven cows, plowing with a yoke of oxen and cutting and pitching hay. Longfellow's full preparatory and collegiate training is in sharp contrast to Whittier's schooling which was cut short by poverty. But the poet's life was not without tragedy. His first wife's death after a miscarriage and his second wife's death by fire deeply saddened him.

Steeped in foreign culture, Longfellow, a gentle man with an incredible store of literary energy whose long and stainless life is reflected in his work, adapted European methods of storytelling and versifying.

Longfellow's clear simplicity of style and beautiful simplicity of imagery did much to make him popular with the rich and poor alike. His success also came from his skill in making a general idea articulate and from the warmth of sentiment he breathed into it. He had a way of touching the universal feelings of the human heart.

Much has been written about Longfellow's genius or lack of it. Whatever else Longfellow

was or might have been, he was a first-rate poet and storyteller.

*Wendell F. Hartt
Millinocket, ME*

HEART OF THE HOMELAND

Your magazine not only reaches to the heart of the homeland, but, as well, to the hearts of the homelander. I am impressed...

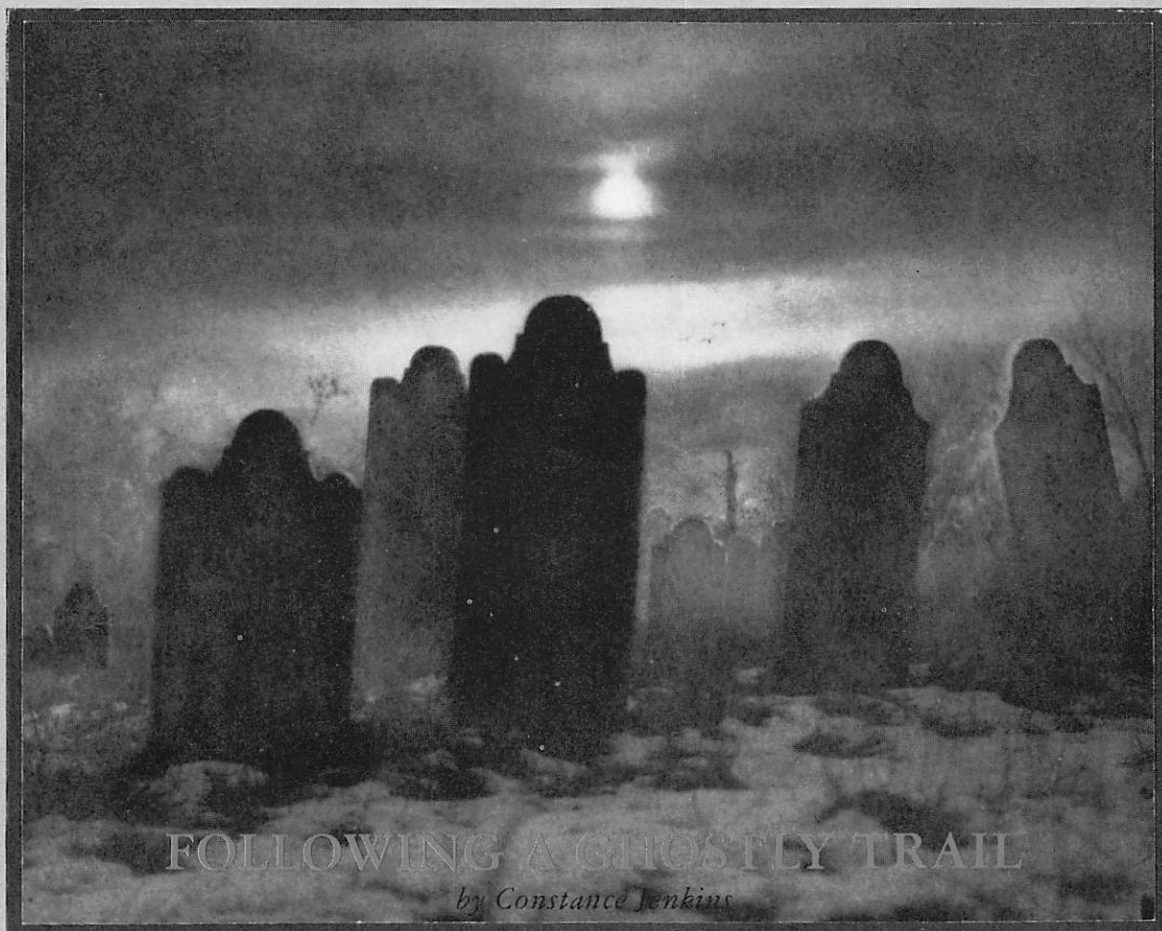
*Herb Leavitt
Augusta, ME*

I have just purchased a copy of your magazine at a local book store, and am very pleased with it. In fact, I like everything in it. Even though I now subscribe to many magazines, yours did seem quite desirable, as I was born in Maine and lived there many years before coming to N.H. I always enjoy books (non-fiction) and magazines that contain stories of New England, especially of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

*Marguerite Allard
Exeter, N.H.*

Back between 1951-1957, when I pastored the Bartlett Union Congregational Church, the story of the Willey House tragedy was often told. For the past three decades I have had a summer home on the border of Hiram

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FOLLOWING A GHOSTLY TRAIL

by Constance Jenkins

You might not like things that go bump in the night, but Norm Gauthier does. His favorite pastime has earned him the name of New England Ghost Hunter.

This Manchester, New Hampshire resident has gained national attention several times since 1978 when he first began to investigate modern New England hauntings. Gauthier has interviewed over 500 people while personally researching 140 cases. He also has collected files on hundreds of other cases.

Although hauntings and eerie encounters may seem like good old Yankee folklore, all kinds of people contact Gauthier about problems "from the other side." A surprising number of old inns and restaurants have resident spooks who startle employees as well as customers. Some are forced to seek an exorcism. Recently, one woman in Maine wrote Gauthier to complain that a ghost is molesting her.

Sincere and articulate, Gauthier speaks enthusiastically about his hobby. He

started reading about ghosts and parapsychology about 12 years ago out of curiosity. By 1978, he was so intrigued that he decided to investigate some cases himself.

"I put an ad in the paper asking to meet anyone who had encountered a ghost," he recalled, "and three of the five replies were from the media!" Cases popped up in time, however, and Gauthier works on four or five reports each year. Once he learns of a supposedly haunted place, he meets the residents and studies the history of the property to learn why it may be haunted. Finally, he sets up recording equipment to capture any ghostly communications that human hearing may miss. Strange as it may seem, he does pick up sounds about every third try.

The recordings, officially termed "Electronic Voice Phenomena," range from footsteps, sighs, and door creakings to actual sentences. Most are whispered and some are in foreign languages. Although the noises are clearly audible

on the tapes, they were unnoticed by anyone present in the room when the recorder was running.

The Ghost Hunter has been taping sounds for the last four or five years. "I was lucky enough to get a voice on tape on my first try," he explained, "so I was encouraged to keep trying. I never go back to a place where I failed to get a voice because there are so many other places waiting ahead." He also noted that most encounters occur at night when the regular five senses are tired and the sixth sense can dominate.

"It's difficult to notice a ghost in the daytime," he said. "One could be making sounds right now but conversation or passing cars could drown it out."

Self-employed in the advertising field, Gauthier maintains a flexible schedule to seek out his hauntings. His travels have taken him all over New England, attracting considerable attention each time. Area papers have featured his adventures, and Gauthier has appeared on "That's Incredible" and "Evening

Magazine" to discuss his findings. In addition, he has been interviewed on over 30 radio stations, from Honolulu to British Columbia. And through it all, the gray haired man has remained down to earth despite the inherently weird nature of his studies.

"What I'm really dealing with is death survival," he began matter of factly. "Death only occurs to the physical being and it's just a step in eternity. Or, you could say that life is just a step between two eternities."

From his experience, Gauthier defines ghosts as an "energy force that is in all of us." He surmises that the speed of a violent or otherwise traumatic death prevents the life force from realizing that death has occurred even though the physical body is no longer present. He is careful to differentiate between a spirit and a ghost. While a spirit moves on to the proper dimension after death, a ghost somehow remains trapped, doomed to robotically repeat some part of its life. Both spirits and ghosts can share the same physical space as humans, he believes.

"I think a spirit retains the same traits and characteristics it had as a living person. An analytical person will become an analytical spirit, and a maternal sort of person will be a maternal spirit. I don't think spirits age," he continued, "so when a child dies, its spirit will remain an innocent one."

Walking up to the edge of life and peeking over the other side has reinforced Gauthier's views about life after death. He has no conflicts with Christian beliefs and calls himself a follower of Jesus Christ. "I think it's inconceivable that God would waste a soul on the short duration of a human life," he asserted. Later, he pointed out that reincarnation is the third most widely held belief in the world, preceded by belief in the existence of a soul and belief in a Creator.

Not every case that the Ghost Hunter has investigated has been enlightening or dramatic, but he recounted a few of the more interesting ones. A few years ago, he was contacted by a young couple after the husband's dead mother appeared to him in a vivid dream, instructing him to do three things—get rid of some chairs, get rid of his wife's doll

collection, and hide some jewelry. The couple consulted with a local psychic who warned them to give away the dolls because they look like little people and a spirit could mistakenly possess them.

The couple ignored the other instructions in the dream, unfortunately, and returned home one evening to find their house ablaze. A thief had stolen the jewelry, then set fire to the house by laying gasoline soaked strings across the very chairs that the mother had said to get rid of.

In a more recent case, Gauthier had to stop investigating before he got any answers. "Something peculiar had been going on in a small ranch house," he said. "A lot of tenants moved in and out which is the first sign that something is wrong. One person told me that crucifixes were nailed over every doorway, and the cellar had inexplicably been filled completely with earth." Frustrated, Gauthier is now waiting for the new owner of the house to contact him before he can do more research.

Luckily, not all hauntings need be unnerving. Gauthier cited one example where a family lives in harmony with their noisy spook by simply shouting into the attic each night that it is late and they are going to sleep.

"While there are a few sadistic ghosts, most of them are like 'regular people' and are not dangerous," stressed Gauthier. Despite the lack of a physical body, they tend to carry on their lives, doing whatever gave them comfort as a person. Older spirits may roam through a house as if to make sure everyone is safe. Others may just rock in a ghostly chair by the window. "There is no past or future in the spirit world," Gauthier pointed out. "There is only now."

Always eager to explore the dim fringes outside everyday life, Gauthier founded the Society For Psychic Research of New Hampshire and Massachusetts in 1979. Starting with just 20 members, the Society has blossomed into a group with 400 members nationwide. Annual dues are only \$5 and the Society meets monthly to hear lectures or attend workshops. To join, write Gauthier at: The Society For Psychic Research, P.O. Box 142, Manchester, NH 03105. You'll receive a membership card and monthly newsletter.

The Society deals with a wide range of psychic phenomena such as astral projections, reincarnation, mediums, psychics, numerology, dream interpretation, palmistry, thought photography, psychometry, auras, automatic writing, and lots more.

Norm Gauthier asserts that these parapsychological abilities are "a common river that flows among us all." He added modestly, "I still call myself a student."



Constance Jenkins writes a column called "Odd Ends" in her hometown paper. She lives in Goffstown, New Hampshire.

NEW ENGLAND AFFLUENCE

Waving its banner of crimson
Across a sapphire sky,
A jeweled pageant called autumn
Enriches hills nearby.
On slopes of a wooded haven
Affluent trees of fall
Fling down a carpet of Persian
In patterns dazzling all!

Jean Gier

Lackawanna, New York

HOMESICKNESS

Now, in the red leaf time
I wake in the night
to remembered cries.
Far off the wild geese fly
and my ears,
stuffed with Southern softness,
cannot hear their piercing call.
But, O! my soul,
bred to frost and harsh winds,
stirs at the turning of the year,
grows restless of the sunny days,
and wakes in the night
hungry for ice on the windows
and a springing brilliance of color,
the last glory of the failing light.
The geese go and return
even as the sun moves
north to south and back again.
My sun-blinded soul
hides from the tropic glare,
yet in the autumn dark night
rouses to the unheard beat of wings
and would wrench itself from me
to follow the great free ones.

Cher Holt-Fortin
Stone Mt., Georgia

Ms. Holt-Fortin, who spent her summers in Winter Harbor, Maine, is working on a Ph.D. in English at Georgia State University.

THE NIGHT VISITOR

Fiction by Era Zistel

They were sitting on the sofa, Matilda with her knitting, Tommy beside her, his paws tucked under his chest, his eyes slits of contentment, his breathing making the rasping sound as usual, louder tonight as always whenever the air was damp.

It got on Matilda's nerves, the rasping, she supposed because it worried her so. The last time she had spoken to the vet, she had told him she didn't think the pills were doing much good, and he'd smiled sympathetically. "He's an old cat, Miss Barnes."

Yes, they had been together more than twelve years, good years, all in all, but lonely. There were times when Tommy was sleeping, or she was sitting in the park, that she would have enjoyed the company of another person. But not just anyone. That was the trouble. She'd never met the right person.

Actually, Tommy was better company than those people she did know. He was easy to talk to, listened attentively, respectfully even when she said foolish things. He never talked back or disagreed, and always adjusted nicely to her moods. He had only one grave fault: the shortness of his life.

Again she tasted in advance the grief that would come, and again told herself that would be better than the other way around. Without her, what bewilderment and fear he would suffer, and then, what would his end be like?

The ideal would be if they could just go together, gently, with no great fuss—her imagination raced to fill in the details, the two of them found sitting here some morning, very likely by that scoundrel of a Paul, come at last to fix the leaking faucet in the kitchen, she sitting with her knitting on her lap, Tommy stretched out beside her. My, what a clattering Paul's feet would make running down the stairs!

She laughed, and glanced down at Tommy, fearing the sudden sound might have awakened him, and was startled to find him already awake, standing at the edge of the sofa, his fur bristling, his eyes wide, staring at something on the other side of the room.

What was he looking at so intently? Her eyesight was still tolerably good, her hearing, too. She couldn't see anything over there, nor hear anything but Tommy's wheezing, and the dripping faucet in the kitchen.

"Tommy, what is it?"

The tip of his tail twitched. With a small grunt he leaped off

the sofa and went bounding across the room, to circle the spot where his gaze had been directed, his fur still bristling.

"But there's nothing there," she protested.

With a quick glance at her he moved again, jumping up onto the arm of the chair where he always went when—when someone was at the door. So that was it! Calling out "Just a moment!" she put aside her knitting and went over to open the door. There was no one on the other side of it, or in the hall, or going down the stairs.

"You were mistaken," she said to Tommy. With a short cry of agreement he went back to the sofa with her, and sat beside her, purring.

By the following evening the incident had been forgotten, so that once again she was taken completely by surprise.

While her knitting needles went swiftly in and out she was thinking how nice it would be if Tommy could learn her language—she knew perfectly well he had one of his own, but unfortunately she could understand little of it—so that they might converse during these still hours, or almost still. Paul hadn't come to fix the leaking faucet.

"I'll be really firm with him tomorrow," she said, then felt a chill go down her spine when she saw that, just as last night, Tommy was standing at the edge of the sofa, staring fixedly at something on the other side of the room.

"Tommy?" she questioned.

He responded with a slight movement of his tail, then leaped to the floor, and the happening of the night before was repeated, with a little change that made it even more—puzzling, Matilda decided. Beyond thinking that, she would not go. Circling around whatever had engaged his attention, Tommy actually seemed pleased this time. It almost looked as if he arched his back and—leaned against something. Then, just as the night before, he jumped on the arm of the chair.

There had to be some logical explanation. She crossed the room and examined everything carefully, even looking under the rug, while Tommy watched her gravely. She stood in the spot where Tommy's gaze had been directed, and concluded he had been looking at something or other just over her head, at about the height of—well, a fairly tall person.

"Nonsense," she said. "It was a fly or something, wasn't it?"

Tommy answered, but not in her language.



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The following day she found herself, against her better judgment, even against her will, looking forward to that evening. Would it happen again? Most unlikely. Yet the possibility that it might added a bit of zest to an otherwise drab day.

Yes, drab. Her life was drab, she told herself that evening, as colorless as the old tapestry hanging on the wall, left behind there by some previous tenant. Why had she allowed it to remain? Out of sheer inertia, just as, out of sheer inertia, she had allowed herself to settle into this uneventful, passive existence. There were times when she had thought of doing some sort of volunteer work, but she'd never gone beyond just thinking, and now, of course, she didn't want to leave Tommy alone.

She put her hand down to stroke him, and was plunged into breathless anticipation because it was coming again, whatever it was. She didn't look at Tommy, but felt through her hand the change, the bristling of his fur, the tensing of his body, and his slowly slipping away. She heard the thud as he landed on the floor, and watched as he stalked over, tail high, to circle around and lean confidently, even affectionately, against *something*.

The time had come. She cleared her throat.

"Whatever you are," she said in a voice that sounded foolishly loud. "I'd like to see you, too."

Tommy whisked away to jump on the arm of the chair, where he tilted his head and followed with great interest what was taking place. Right where his gaze rested there was a rustling, not so much audible as visible, a wavering and reforming and condensation of the air, as if an invisible sculptor were molding it into some new form.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," a man's voice said while his figure slowly came into view. "It gives me great pleasure to accept your invitation."

"Oh dear!" Matilda said with her hand over her heart. "I must be dreaming," she thought. Then was Tommy dreaming? Were they having the same dream?

The man was looking down at his feet, which were not quite complete. As soon as they were, he came over to the sofa, bowed smartly and said, "Colonel

Angus Barrett, ma'am. At your service."

"Oh," Matilda answered. Accepting a situation like this was one thing, knowing how to handle it, quite another. Tommy bounded off the arm of the chair and crossed the room to sinuate his body against the visitor's leg.

"He—likes you," Matilda ventured.

"He is not afraid. Most animals are not."

"I—" The thought startled Matilda. "I think I'm not either."

The man stooped over to stroke Tommy, whose rasping purr seemed to fill the entire room, and while he was bent over, so that she could not see his face, he said, "Truly, you are not?"

"Truly. I don't know how you got here, but I asked you to appear, and you are welcome."

"I am enormously grateful." The man straightened up, and now that his figure was clear she could see that he was a person of some dignity, and he had a nice smile. "Then you will permit me to remain?"

"Yes. Do sit down, Colonel—"

"Barrett, ma'am. Angus Barrett."

He sat in the chair on the other side of the room, and something seemed to have greatly moved him, so that for the moment he could not speak. Tommy tested with a paw, then jumped on his lap.

"Tommy!" Matilda said sharply. She told herself it was because she didn't know how the man would react, but she knew that wasn't the whole truth. Never before had he shown a preference for someone else. At once he came back and settled down beside her, but his eyes remained on the man.

"I have a certain attraction for animals," the man said gently. "He loves you."

Matilda blushed. He can read my mind, she thought. I must be careful. Then her blush deepened as she realized he would be aware of that thought, too.

"Being allowed to appear is a great privilege," the man said, as if to himself. "It almost never happens. Most people are not aware of us. Or else they are afraid."

"Us?" Matilda was not sure whether she had spoken aloud.

"Oh yes. There are many of us."

Her next question was hardly formu-

lated and certainly not spoken. Nevertheless he answered.

"Yes, I am a ghost." He looked at her sadly. "Now I suppose you will want me to leave."

Matilda glanced at Tommy and put her hand on his relaxed body.

"You're welcome to stay," she said.

"Oh, thank you, ma'am, from the bottom of my—" The ghost of Colonel Barrett laughed. "You have no idea how difficult it is for us, feared as we are by some, ridiculed by others. If only we could be accepted as are other things that ordinarily cannot be seen or heard or felt, if only, instead of mocking or screaming in terror, they would try to help us —"

He stopped and looked embarrassed.

"Dear lady, I beg your pardon. I had quite forgotten where I was. I must confess this is the very first time I have appeared. I had given up hope, and now that it has happened I am—even more confounded than you are."

"You've been —" There was no need to complete the sentence, for Colonel Barrett answered immediately.

"Haunting is the word, ma'am. We do not like it much, but no matter. Yes, I have been haunting this house for many a year. Indeed, it begins to look as though I might outlast it."

Quite visibly he shuddered, making little eddies in the air around him.

"That is what we dread, losing our houses. And that is why we have acquired such a bad reputation, especially in parts of the world where many houses are old. When our houses become old we grow desperate, and some of us try to force ourselves back into the living world, which is most unfortunate, because the tremendous effort required to make an uninvited appearance results in horrible distortion of both substance and spirit. So much so that it may actually hasten the destruction of the dwelling instead of preventing it."

"But can't you just go and haunt another house?"

"Alas, no."

"Well, maybe if you lose your house you don't have to haunt any more. You'd be free."

"No, ma'am. There is only one way to be set free."

"How?"

"By doing a good deed."

"But that's—that should be so easy."

The Colonel leaned forward eagerly.

"Can you help me, then?"

"Well—just give me a little time. I'll think of something."

Suddenly the Colonel seemed to grow very restless. In fact, parts of him kept wavering and fading away. The other thought that had been trying to insinuate itself, obstructing Matilda's efforts to think of a good deed, finally broke through.

"You know I'm thinking it anyway," she said. "So I'll ask. Do we—all of us—have to do a good deed when—we die?"

Colonel Barrett opened his mouth and closed it again without uttering a sound. The fluctuating of his body grew more pronounced. Then, as if an invisible hand agitated the air around him, he was obliterated. After a while the agitation died away, and there was left only the empty chair.

Tommy sighed deeply, rested his head on his paws and closed his eyes. Matilda stared at the chair for some time.

"If I have offended you," she said at last, "I didn't mean to. Truly I didn't."

She couldn't sleep that night. For what seemed like hours she listened to the small sounds of the slumbering house, and whenever it settled itself with a creaking somewhere her heart gave a little leap. Several times she even sat up and called out, "Colonel Barrett, is that you?"

But toward morning, when squares of light shone through the windows to bring back reality, it seemed likely that there was no Colonel Barrett, that she'd simply dozed over her knitting and dreamed the whole strange episode. For some reason that filled her with sadness, until it was dispelled by a comforting thought. If she tried hard, perhaps she could go back to that dream?

It was a beautiful day, but she decided not to go and sit in the part as usual, fearing that while she was away Colonel Barrett might return. All through the day she kept an eye on Tommy, who did not let her unaccustomed attention disturb his routine. The day seemed to last forever, but finally it was time for her to sit on the sofa with her knitting. She didn't work at it but simply sat waiting, watching Tommy with such concentra-

tion that he noticed and glanced up questioningly a few times. The silence in the room seemed concentrated, too, and in it her heartbeat sounded louder and louder. For some reason it had become terribly important to her that Colonel Barrett should come back. She didn't know why, didn't care why. Like Tommy, she thought, I only feel.

At last, at last, Tommy stirred and his fur bristled just a little.

"Colonel Barrett," Matilda said at once. "Come back. We've been waiting for you."

Tommy slipped off the sofa and ran across the room with a small cry of welcome. As he circled around the turbulence in the air, slowly the figure of Colonel Barrett emerged. Long before it was complete, even before it was clearly outlined, Matilda gave the speech she had prepared. Out loud? She wasn't sure.

"Please forgive me. If I hurt or displeased you last night, believe me, it was only in ignorance. I have only the kindest of feelings for you."

The ghost taking shape replied sadly.

"It is I who must ask for forgiveness. It was cowardly of me to leave as I did, but I was so ashamed."

"Ashamed!"

He waited for his feet to appear, then went to sit in his chair.

"It is difficult, but I have resolved to go through with it. I only hope you will have some compassion —"

"Really, Colonel Barrett, if it is hard for you, there's no need. I'm just glad you're here again."

"No, dear lady. Friendship cannot be built like that. It must have an honest foundation."

"Friendship," Matilda murmured. "I'd like very much to have yours. I don't think I've ever had a real friend. A really true friend, I mean."

"Nor I, nor I." The Colonel sat for some time studying his hands. "You asked me last night —"

"Whether all of us must do a good deed," Matilda said firmly, then held her breath. But the Colonel didn't even waver.

"No, only some of us. And, knowing you as I have these many years—yes, ever since you came to live here—I can assure you that you need not fear. True,

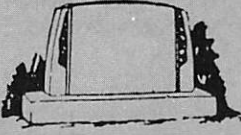


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you have done the world no great good, but neither have you done it any harm."

"But you!" Matilda protested. "I'm not such a bad judge of character. You couldn't have been guilty of any great wrongdoing."

The Colonel seemed not to have heard. "While I —" He clasped his hands as if in pain. "My crime was that I never sinned. If I had been poor and insignificant that would have been of no great importance. But I was a man of considerable wealth and influence. And not once did I sin."

"But really!" Matilda said in disbelief. "That should be—that's supposed to be a virtue."

"Thus did I help nurture the bigotry and intolerance and prejudices of the world. I was a paragon of virtue. First because I felt I had to live up to the expectations of my mother, who took great pride in me. Then it simply became a reputation that I had to maintain."

"People everywhere pointed me out as virtually a saint among men, sat in judgment of others for not being like me. I myself became a judge, and in that position of authority had no pity, accepted no excuses, made no allowances. The weak-willed, the foolish, the unfortunate—all who for any reason did not conform to my inflexible standards had to be punished. I did harm, much harm..."

He fell silent and Matilda waited, not daring to speak because she could tell by the fluctuations that he'd disappear if she said the wrong thing.

"Don't go away," she finally murmured.

Colonel Barrett took a deep breath and the fluctuations stopped.

"Thank you," he said. Then he sighed. "Now you know why I am a ghost. It is a punishment I deserve, I admit. But now—I am afraid. This house —" His hand took in the room. "I had it built myself. It was very beautiful in its day. But it has grown old. Each year it sinks a little. I have heard them, the owners, debating over whether it should be torn down. I have not much time."

"Well, I have been thinking," Matilda said. "You could do your good deed by helping the couple on the top floor."

"Yes?"

"They're very poor. You could get money for them."

"How?"

"But don't you have ways of doing things, making things happen?"

"I know of none."

Matilda laughed.

"And, if we believe in you at all, we think of ghosts as all powerful. Last night, for instance —" She hesitated, then went on. "When I couldn't sleep, I thought I could just call you and you would hear and come back."

"Alas, I was not here. I am not always in the house. If I am discouraged I may not come here for weeks. In protracted periods of depression I have even left out years. But for all of us there is this longing to return, to keep in touch with our houses, in the hope that we will at last find a way to attain our freedom."

"Then when you are not here —" Matilda stopped, because the outlines of the Colonel were fading. "Please," she begged, "I can't help what comes into my head. If I shouldn't ask, don't answer. But please stay here, please stay!"

"When I am not here —" Colonel Barrett said in a small voice. "There is a place," he continued rapidly, running words together and disappearing at the same time, "where we are all together, like—a—big—"

"Colonel!" Matilda cried. "I don't want to know. Please come back!"

She sat for a long time, listening to the rasping of Tommy's breathing and the dripping faucet in the kitchen. Then Tommy yawned and looked up at her, and something told her she needn't worry, Colonel Barrett would return, and a kind of happiness she'd never known before made her heart beat hard, but without pain.

That night she slept well.

The next morning she stayed in bed later than usual, quite late, and although the day was again fine she did not leave the apartment until just before the stores closed.

The butcher gave her a peculiar look when she went in to buy Tommy's meat.

"How are you feeling, Miss Barnes?"

"Oh, fine," she answered with enthusiasm.

"Got some real color in your cheeks, I notice."

Yes, now that he had mentioned it, she did feel exceptionally well. It had something to do with Colonel Barrett,

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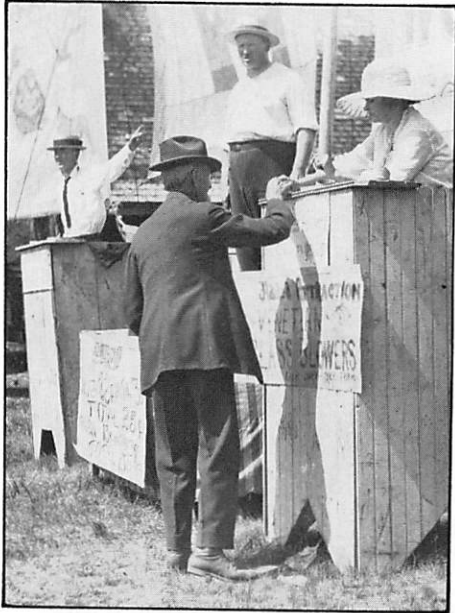


HARVEST TIME Photography by George French

Above, corn shocks in Fryeburg; below, hayride & bulb preparation

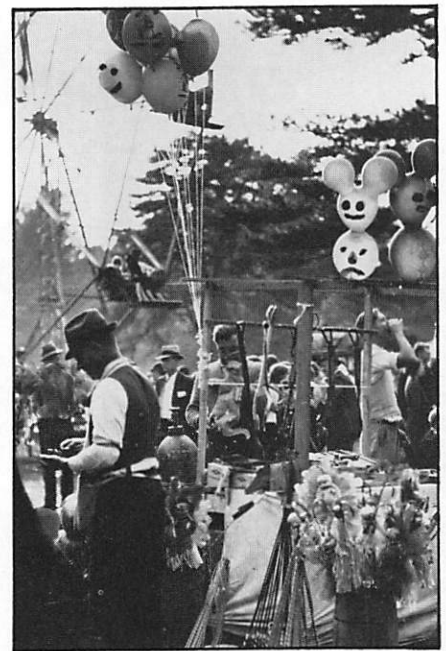


FAIR TIME



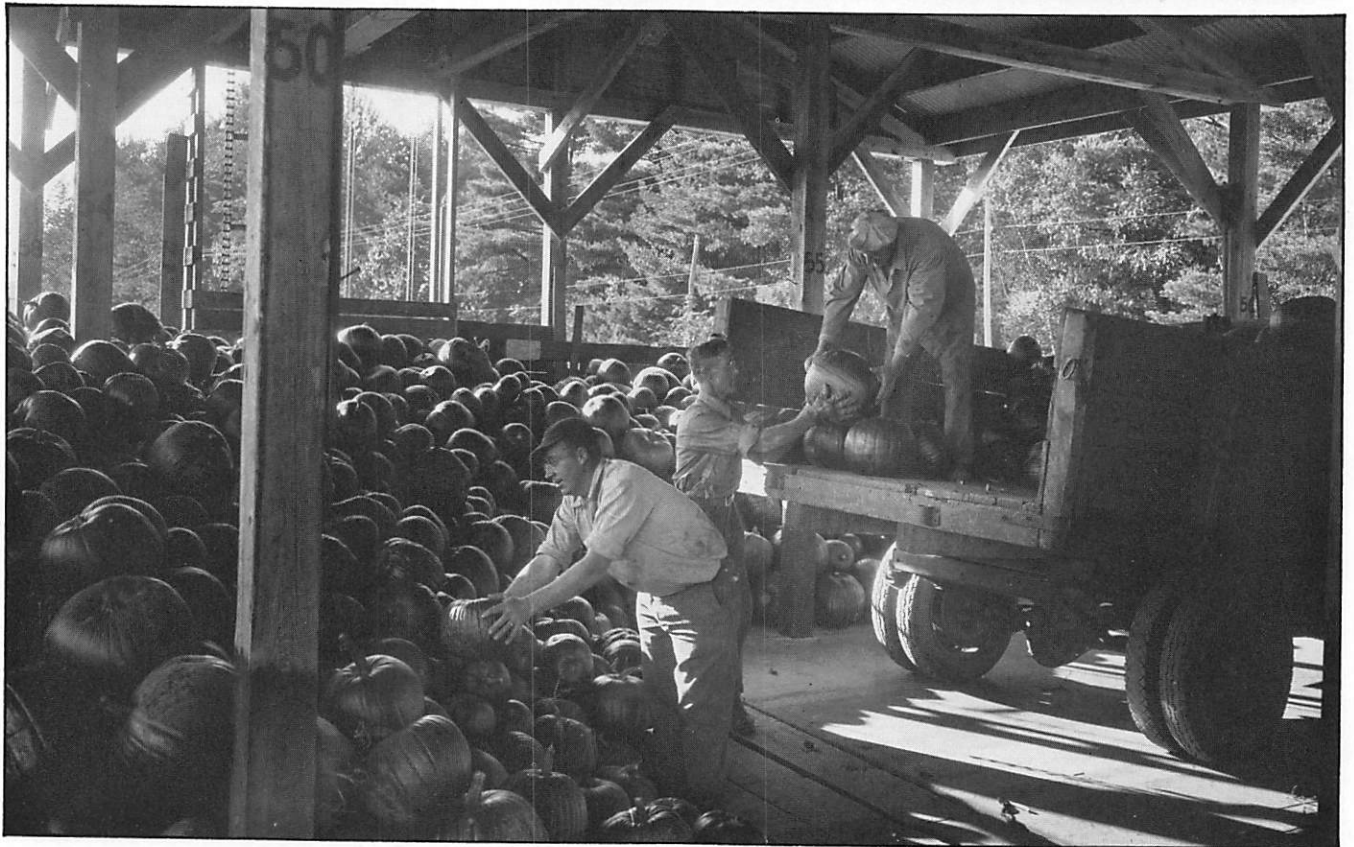
*This page, photos of Cornish Fair,
over forty years ago.*





*George French photos of Fryeburg Fair, ca. 1947.
Below: auctioning Baby Beef.*





John Greenleaf Whittier's "Maud Muller"

*"She stopped where the cool spring
bubbled up
And filled for him her small tin cup."*

Between York and South Berwick on Route 91, these two lines from John Greenleaf Whittier's lovely poem "Maud Muller" can be seen inscribed on a stone marker where a steady flow of cool clear water from a pipe set into a low stone wall gurgles softly as it tumbles into an ancient, rustic wooden trough.

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in 1807 on his ancestral farm in Haverhill, Massachusetts (the setting for *Snowbound* and established as a Whittier Memorial with the help of the poet himself), and resided in Massachusetts most of his life. He has endeared himself to people through his poetry—especially his romantic poems set in rural New England.

Whittier was a contemporary of such literary giants as Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, Dickinson, and the three Brahmin poets—Holmes, Lowell, and Longfellow. He was very much a part of that great nineteenth century literary movement often referred to as "The Golden Age of New England Literature." Never before or since has a single state or region produced such a concentration of accomplished literary figures, and all the above-mentioned except Emily Dickinson were born while Maine was still a part of Massachusetts.

Most of New England's literary notables of Whittier's time can be classified either as transcendentalists, Brahmins, or dissenters; but Whittier and Emily Dickinson remained apart from these three groups. Whittier was born and reared on a small farm where life was rigorous and money was scarce. Unlike his Brahmin contemporaries, he had little formal education. A few weeks each year at the district school and a year at Haverhill Academy was all the education that he could acquire. He was largely self-taught.

He was not a robust lad; he had to cope with fragile health all of his long life. Certainly he was not physically suited to the arduous toil demanded of him by his Quaker father.

An unexpected chain of events unveiled Whittier's talent for writing poetry that heretofore had remained hidden from all except his understanding mother and sisters. His admiring younger sister, unbeknown to her brother, sent one of his poems to the *Free Press*—a recently established paper published in Newburyport. Later Whittier himself sent a poem to the paper. The young editor of the *Free Press*, William Lloyd Garrison, immediately recognized Whittier's potential and sent a laudatory note to the young poet encouraging him to pursue a literary career. So firmly did Garrison believe in the talents of Whittier that he made a special trip to the Whittier farm to urge him to further his education. He found young Whittier toiling with his father in the field. It was largely through Garrison's efforts that Whittier's father consented to his attending the new Haverhill Academy. With no money to spare, Whittier turned to making slip-

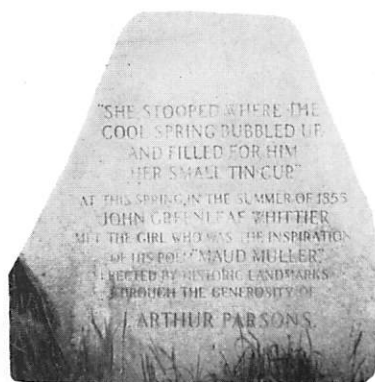
pers to finance himself during the first term at school. He earned enough by teaching in a district school and doing bookkeeping for a local merchant to complete the second term at the Academy.

When Whittier was twenty-one, he worked for a year and a half as editor and writer for a publishing company in Boston. With the four or five hundred dollars he saved from his first literary position, he returned to the family farm and freed it from the shackles of a mortgage.

His father died in 1830. Whittier was left with the responsibility of supporting the family. In 1836 he sold the farm and moved with his beloved older sister Elizabeth and his mother to the large house in Amesbury (known today as the "Whittier Home") where he spent most of his life devoted to poetry. He left the farm, but his boyhood days on the homestead permeated his poems. Who from the northcountry can fail to relate to his beautiful winter idyll *Snowbound*? In fact, Maine seems to be a better setting for the poem than Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Whittier was a frequent visitor to the





Pine Tree State and sang of its beauty, its legends, and its history. Moosehead Lake, Sebago Lake, Casco, Harpswell, Saco, and Castine are just a few of the places in Maine that one encounters in some of his poems. People of Maine also inspired him; and one such person was "Maud Muller," a barefoot maiden whom he met raking hay.

It was a pleasant morning, and Whittier and his sister rented a horse and carriage to ride along a peaceful, winding country road toward South Berwick. Near what is referred to as Four Corners, the Whittiers halted the horse under the shade of an apple tree and refreshed themselves from the spring which bubbled forth from a stone wall and flowed across the road. It was here that Whittier met ever-so-briefly the rustic maiden who made an indelible imprint upon his memory and thus gained immortality. Whittier recalled the incident years later and described "Maud Muller" as "A very beautiful young girl in scantest summer attire . . . As we talked with her, we noticed that she strove to hide her bare feet by raking hay over them, blushing as she did so through the tan of her cheek and neck."

Maud Muller was not the real name of the young girl; it was a name that Whittier is thought to have adopted from the descendant of a Hessian who deserted during the Revolutionary War.

Whittier displayed his fondness for sentimental country idylls when he described the romantic encounter between the Judge and the barefoot maiden at the spring. Both seemed to have been instantly smitten with love. The Judge put aside the cares of weighty legal decision, and she "forgot her brier-torn gown, and her graceful ankles bare and brown."

Their conversation was pleasant but limited to such mundane topics as the weather, haying, and the singing birds. Then came the inevitable parting:

*At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.*

But each pondered over what it would be like to be married to the other and live a different life style:

*Maud Muller looked and sighed:
"Ah me!"*

*That I the Judge's bride might be!
He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine."*

Unfortunately she stood so long dreaming about the Judge that the rain fell upon her father's clover and all her labor went for naught. A practical Maine farmer without an ounce of sentimentality might find this disturbing.

Obviously the Judge saw in "Maud Muller" qualities not found in the average rustic, and he dwelled upon her beauty during his slow and reluctant return into his world—the cold world of reality.

*"A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne'er bath it been my lot to meet."*

And then he went on to say:

*"Would she were mine, and I to-day
Like her, a harvester of hay."*

Their paths never crossed again, and each came to accept almost fatalistically his/her station in life. The Judge yielded to the pressures brought to bear upon him by his socially ambitious sisters and mother (obviously no reflection upon Whittier's own life).

*He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for
power.*

"Maud Muller" did not fare any better and was doomed to rearing a large family and endless toil that most likely took its toll upon her youthful beauty.

*She wedded a man unlearned and
poor*

*And many children played 'round
her door.*

Whittier made it clear in a very Victorian fashion that the passing years did not erase the sentimental attachment that each had for the other and romantically suggested a possible union after death:

*Ah well! for us all some sweet hope
lies*

*Deeply buried from human eyes;
And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!*

Although Whittier had a tendency to regard this poem as being of little consequence, "Maud Muller" must have become a household name. One year, after I had read and discussed the poem, one of my students brought in a large poster he had discovered in his grandmother's attic depicting "Maud Muller" raking hay. The very same week another student brought in a tiny perfume bottle. There were two words on the bottle: "Maud Muller."

Today Whittier shares with Maine's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow the honor of being the most beloved American poet from the nineteenth century; and Whittier has never suffered the vicissitudes of literary criticism that Longfellow has. "Maud Muller" continues to have a tremendous appeal to young students of American literature. Recently, after I had finished reading the poem to my American Studies class, one young lady with tears streaming down her cheeks exclaimed, "That is such a beautiful poem!"

Many years ago the site at the spring was set aside as a historical landmark through the generosity of Arthur Parsons, a descendant of the Parsons who settled Parsonsfield, Maine, and were prominent in Effingham, New Hampshire. The site has become somewhat of a shrine; and many people each year, especially summer visitors, drive along the same road that Whittier and his sister took in 1855 and drink the cool clear water from the spring that bears the name "Maud Muller's Spring." There are those, I am told, who turn toward the field that is now separated from the spring by a high fence and drink a toast in honor of one whose real name we shall never know.

Author's note: I wish to express my many thanks to Bainbridge Parsons of York, grandson of Arthur Parsons, who was so helpful in providing me with pertinent information for this article.

*Jack C. Barnes
Hiram*



Can You Place It?

If you can identify the location in the top photograph, write us at P.O. Box 266, Cornish, Maine 04020. First postmarked correct answer wins a subscription to BitterSweet. Last month's location (see below for another view) was Brownfield before the 1947 fire. See Ayah for answers to the August Can You Place It?



A SONG TO SHARE — AS THE FIDDLERS PLAY

by Cathy Lee Morris

In summer time, fiddling contests overspread the north country. They entertain audiences in bucolic meadows, at seaside, lakeside, in town squares or at many fairs. Among the range of people they attract are tourists eager for local color, families on cultural outings, and senior citizens who set up folding chairs in the shade to hear melodies that have remained favorites for as long as memory has sustained them. For the fiddlers who travel the contest circuit, this is the meeting ground where they apply their folk art.

They are at the heart of the American grass roots tradition. Who can listen to the refrain, "Turkey in the hay, Turkey in the straw," without tapping his feet to the time or imagining the swirling calico skirts of country girls as they reel from partner to partner?

At old-time barndances the fiddler always acted as Master of Ceremonies, shouting the calls for the hard-working folks who unwound by dancing the night away. Always a charismatic figure, the fiddler recurs in our folklore, and the centuries-old tunes have become an archive of our treasured past.

At colonial contests, George Washington requested his favorite tunes, and Davy Crockett slung his fiddle alongside old Betsy for companionship in the lonely frontier. Back when campaign trails were travelled on horseback and debates delivered from stumps, a politician without his accompanying fiddler just plain lacked credibility. And automagnate Henry Ford used to sponsor contests because he felt fiddle songs reinforced sound American values—the kind that span history.

Learning fiddle songs is discovering that they portray a picture of life as it once was, at different times, in different cultures. The songs maintain an ability to find legendary events from the ordinary cycles of life. They honor the simpler aspirations which our ancestors cherished.

It is of little wonder that this old-time music is so popular in places like New England, where a thin border separates past from present—a line through which modern generations absorb the ways of their grandparents. Here, where people still hold leather reins and "make do" on terse homesteads, there is a natural affinity with the traditional music which upholds their accomplishments.

A universal rule at fiddling contests is that the music must be at least one hundred years old and played in authentic style with danceable timing. Many times there is a separate category for young contestants; and, while the intermission entertainment varies with the event, local bluegrass bands are often interspersed.

There is no one stereotyped fiddler and contestants are as varied as a New England sampler, independent in their fiddling styles and choice of songs. Many feature Maine's own cowpoke, Yodlin' Slim Clark, who strums a twangy guitar and passes on "dogie" songs that cowhands once sang to the cattle to prevent stampede.

Alva Morrison is past champion of the Bethel, Maine, contest and a self-taught fiddling veteran. He explains that the "biggest competition is in Starks, New Hampshire, but I prefer the small, local contests. I go to as many as I can; I get to jam with other fiddlers and add to my songs." Typical in the tradition of the oral handing-down of music, Alva carries his cache of tunes in his head, a conservative estimate of which numbers in the hundreds.

Lee Holman made her debut at the Rangeley, Maine, contest which is held each summer as part of their heritage celebration: "A Wild Mountain Tyme." She is still learning, a new performer who "doesn't expect to win anything. I'm after the experience of playing to an audience." Aware of the ethnicity of fiddling songs, Lee prefaces her selections: a Welsh waltz, a Bavarian polka, a ballad

of Shetland Isles' rum-runners. At Rangeley, the local favorite was Ann Woodbury, who, with supple style and flair, competed with white-haired men in western dress and men in coveralls. Journeying to fiddle during the winter months in resort Arizona and as far north as Alaska, Ann is a true minstrel in the medieval tradition of wandering bard.

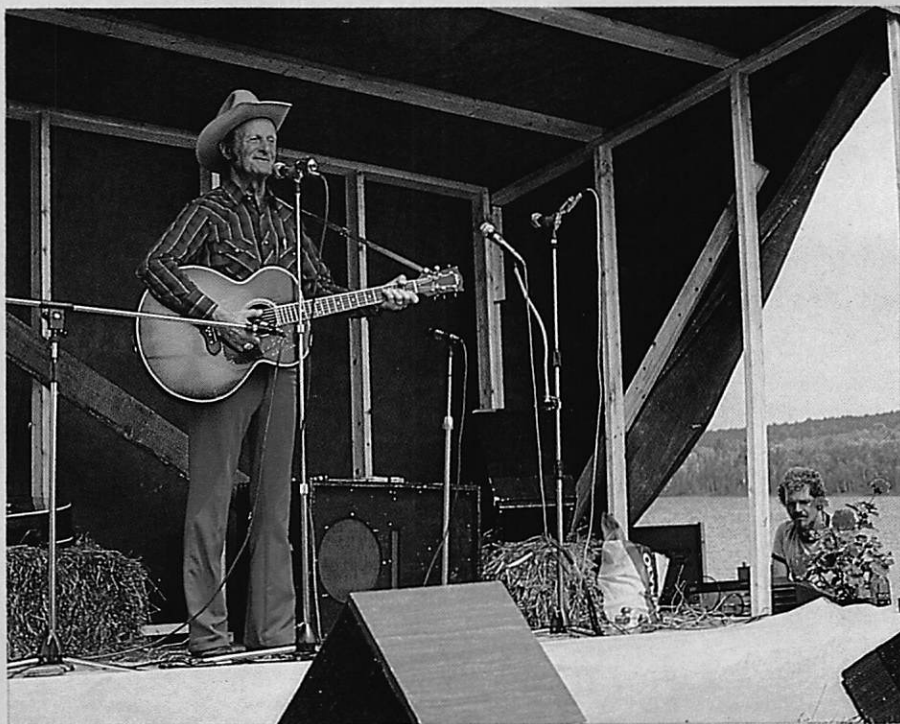
The origin of the fiddle dates to the Middle Ages where it is first classified as a "bowed lute" and played in courtyards. Crafted by the Amati family circa 1550, the fiddle was the predecessor to the modern violin and became immensely popular throughout the European Continent and on the British Isles. Ideally suited to life in the wilderness, the fiddle came into the back country of America with the first Anglo-Celt immigrants. It was small, easy to tote, fixable, and could be constructed from poplar, maple, or applewood, with horsehair for the bow strings. Virtually the only instrument on the new frontiers, the sound of the fiddle was heard drifting from crude log homes or the back of ox carts, playing music drawn from the reservoir of British Isles folk songs. These were created communally, by ancestors who, like these American settlers, had no organized format of diversion.

The evolution of a distinct American culture made its impression upon music; spontaneous compositions with new lyrics began to record life in the hills, hollows, ports and prairies of the New World. Country dances lost their courtly austerity and became square dancing reels and breakdowns, four beats to the bar. They revealed the high spirits of an emerging nation. Fiddle music became vernacular American, personifying barnyard animals, extolling the railroads and romanticizing the image of new national heroes like cowboys and lumbermen. Thus was the genesis of "that good old mountain music, the kind that grandma and grandpa used to play."

Page 40 . . .



Top, Ann Woodbury. Left, Buckfield's Lee Holman. Right, Yodlin' Slim Clark, self-proclaimed "Last of the Singing Cowboys."





AUTUMN

A Feast of Leaves

Some people prefer wine. Still others favor flowers. But I consider myself a connoisseur of the finest and most exquisite autumn leaves.

For decades I have traipsed the October woods, intoxicated by the joyous spectrum of red, pinks, yellows, oranges and greens arrayed against the pure blue sky. On many occasions I have followed the individual leaves during their unique, spiraling journeys into unnamed streams. Captured by the currents, they speed up, shooting over miniature rapids and through transparent pools before splashing against rocks and driftwood or clustering together, layer upon layer, bobbing to and fro in the shallows. With a magnifying glass, I have studied the convex beads of water gathered on leaf surfaces and tips, each droplet a collage of swirling microcosmic debris. I have held various multicolored leaves up to the brilliant sunlight, awed by their intricate surface structure which resembles an ordered landscape of harmonious farmlands, rivulets and rivers. Deep in the forest, I have chanced upon

COLORS

by Myron S. Hoyt

remote and motionless pools whose sunlit surfaces are ablaze with a myriad of blinding reflections, resplendent jewels worthy of the greatest monarchs. At other times the variegated leaves have reminded me of galaxies attached to a singular and vibrant Tree of Life, each suspended by some singular magic between our own earth and sky.

The crisp, invigorating air enlivens me. The brooks babbling over polished stones inspire me. The delicate rose, lavender and canary hues electrify me. The potpourri of scented leaves stimulates me. The fresh, ripe beechnuts satiate me. Yet no matter how hard I try, I cannot imbibe the entire transient autumn forest and season and must content myself with a few hurried nibbles.

Delicious mornings transform themselves into glorious afternoons. With a mile-wide smile, I wander the woods both near and far, quiet and content. By sunset I will be home again.

*Myron Hoyt lives in Phillips, Maine.
The foliage photographs are also his.*











MARY'S APPLE CHARACTERS

Story and photographs by W. Marc Bernsau

"What happened to that apple?" asks Mary Blake's six-year-old son David, looking for a snack in the refrigerator. Most likely it is an often asked question in the Blake household in West Baldwin, Maine, as Mary makes apples into colorful applehead character dolls. In fact, it was while she was expecting David that she found the time to develop the craft into a prosperous business.

"I was experimenting with apples when a friend of mine stopped by with her little girl," Mary says. "The heads were starting to dry and she asked me if she could have one for her birthday. That was the first one I made. From there, shop owners saw them, asked if they could have five or so and one thing led to another."

Mary has never really kept an accu-

rate account of just how many dolls she has made. Right now her line includes twelve different characters.

"I have a chimney sweep, a Santa Claus... I can never remember them all. The flower lady has always been a favorite with everybody: she's good for hospital presents; the man with the pipe: he's like a lumberjack; the butterfly catcher: she's one of the fancy ones. Then there's the lady with a purse: she just sort of makes it an even twelve."

Ideas for the dolls come from people Mary Blake has met, or from their suggestions. "My mother was the model for the bag lady, but I've never told her that. When I was a kid, my mother always wore a red coat. When she came home, she always used to have lots of bags full of stuff. She comes over a lot and some-

times says, 'Oh, I saw the bag lady in front of the library down in Portland.'"

"I have two kinds of characters—simple and complicated. The simple ones I make more money on, but the complicated ones make it more interesting. The simple ones are like the broom lady. I have the brooms made up, but that's the only prop I don't make. The other props are very time-consuming: making bags, boxes of Wheaties and teddy bears, as opposed to a broom. The amount of time it takes can change the characters quite a bit. I try to avoid too many little details like little axes or saws for a lumberjack. It sounds funny, but if you figure it goes over the time limit, then the initial amount you get paid goes down, down, down. There is really a business end and an artistic end."



After an apple doll is finished, it is sold for \$25 (or less). Mary used to sell in her own gift shop, but now wholesales in other shops. "I know that a lot of the dolls have gone to different places in the world. One of the most interesting trades I made was with a lady from New Zealand. I got a nice New Zealand coin. I thought that was as far away as you could get, yet every once in awhile someone will say, 'Oh, I'm going to Germany with this.' or 'I'll send this to England.' One year I was at the Maine Festival. L.L. Bean's was set up in front of me. The man stitching boots was trying to get me to come work at L.L. Bean because he saw me stitch. Later in the day, he came over and said, 'You know who just bought one of your dolls? The owner of L.L. Bean.'"

"To create a doll will take a whole day or two—to get it just right; but once you've got the pattern, it's easy. I have had a lot of help from other people. My brother, Richie, invented the wire body frame so that it goes together fast and efficiently. My husband suggested the old codger's hat. He said the hat I had was just not right, that it was too much like a cap."

"It takes about two and a half hours to make a doll from start to finish, unless it's one like a bag lady that takes *more* time. The head is carved very fast. For two months, January and February, I do

nothing but heads. I hang them above my wood stove for about ten days to dry. After awhile they begin to look like a bunch of shrunken heads."

"I like the Macintosh apple because it's a very porous, watery apple which dries so that you have really nice wrinkles. Macintosh, I think, stay lighter. I also put them through a salt solution that keeps them light. Delicious apples are too yellow looking. That's what most apple doll makers use, but I don't like the texture or the stickiness."

Mary peels the apple with a peeler to save as much of the apple as possible, using size 100's: the biggest she can get. "I try to touch the apple as little as possible because the oil from your hands will affect it. You have to gently scrape the apple, never press it or it bruises."

Most apple dolls are made with the stem at the top of the head. Mary makes hers with the stem to the side to get the natural shape of the head. "I carve all my heads identically. They always come out differently because they shrink down totally different. No two dolls are ever alike."

"One important thing that really makes the character is the mouth. If you cut it just a little bit too much, the mouth opens and never closes. It's really a delicate operation. Many times I will save the ones not perfect above the mouth and put a mustache on it. The last thing

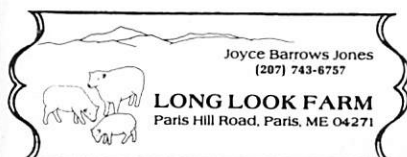
you do is put the wrinkles on top of the forehead and the little crow lines, keeping in mind that the little tiny things become major when the head dries. Out of every ten I carve, only five are good enough to use for heads. After that, if I put the eyes in and they don't go in just right the first time, I have to get rid of it. So, I go through a lot of apples to get a good character."

And character, according to Mary, is what really sells the doll. If a doll sits in her shop for more than a month, Mary will change its head, feeling that people don't like the personality. "It's really weird. When people come into the shop, I can tell which one they are going to buy. They'll go to the one they are going to buy first. Then they'll spend an hour looking at each and every one. Then they'll go back to their original first impression. It's really interesting."

Regardless of the character, Mary makes sure that each one is cheerful in appearance, almost to the point of being cartoonlike. "That way," she says, "they're really not like dolls. They can live with you, sitting on the television rather than put away in a showcase."

Mary, also an avid watercolorist, eventually plans to stop making the dolls and devote herself fulltime to painting. But she is grateful to her nine-inch friends, as they have kept her away from a 'regular' job, enabling her to spend time at home enjoying painting and watching her son grow up.





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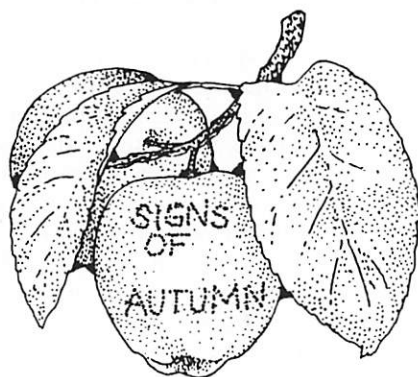
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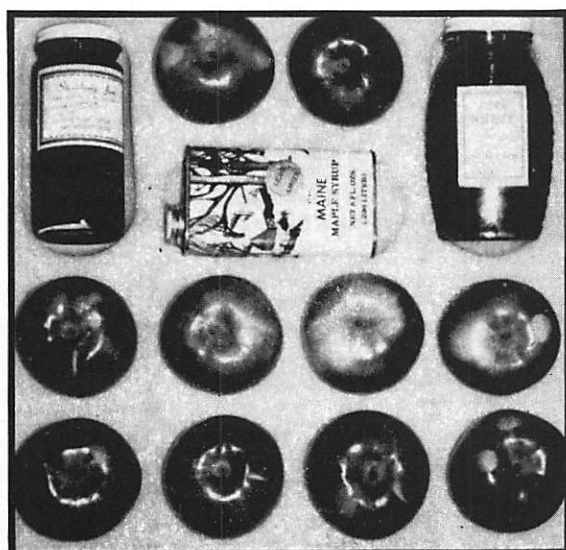
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WOOD FUEL MEASUREMENTS

The traditional way to measure wood is by the cord. A standard cord is a stack of wood whose outside dimensions are 4 feet high by 4 feet wide by 8 feet long...or any combination resulting in 128 cu. ft. of wood, bark, and air space, neatly stacked. Any holes that will accommodate a piece of wood of average dimensions to those in the stack should be deducted from the measure volume. If the firewood is not piled and measured, but loose, Maine law requires that it be sold by the cubic foot, unless other arrangements are made between buyer and seller.

There are other common terms besides a standard cord that you may hear to describe fuel wood measurement. These terms are "load," "rick," and "pile." Terms other than cord or cubic feet are no longer legal in Maine when used to sell or advertise firewood.

The solid wood content of a standard cord of wood will vary with the diameter of the pieces, the neatness of stacking, and the condition of the wood (whether it has branches, is smooth, rough, straight or crooked, etc.). The greatest solid wood content is, of course, in a pile of straight, smooth, large diameter pieces in a neat stack. The least solid wood content is in loosely-packed, crooked, limby, small diameter pieces. Of course from the forest management viewpoint, these latter pieces make a better firewood product.

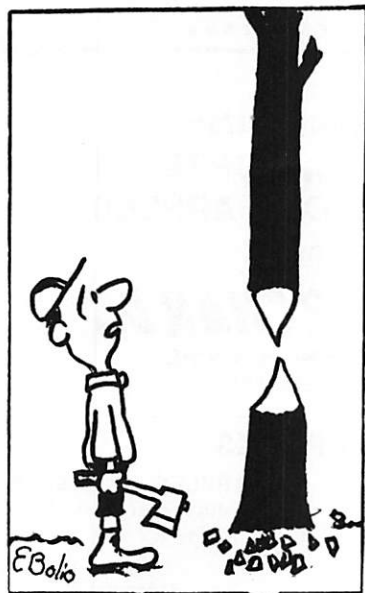
If you purchase your firewood, be sure that you and the seller agree on what you are purchasing. When the firewood is delivered, you should receive a delivery ticket, required by law, containing the following information:

(1) Name and address of the seller; (2) Name and address of buyer; (3) Date delivered; (4) Quantity delivered and quantity upon which the price is based, if this differs from the delivered quantity; (5) Price of amount delivered; and (6) Identity or species and quantity of wood as nearly as is commercially practicable: e.g. 35% oak, 25% maple, 25% beech, and 15% mixed hardwoods, etc.

The bulk of complaints received by state and local consumer agencies regard the delivery of less than full standard cords. When you cut wood into shorter lengths and restack, it will occupy a smaller space than before, because some wood is lost to sawdust and because the pieces will fit together more tightly. However, when you split that wood, it will increase in volume the same amount that it decreased by cutting into smaller pieces. If wood is purchased in stove lengths but not split, you can expect a 10% decrease in the volume of the wood when you stack it.

If you think you were shortchanged, first contact the seller to see if you can reach some sort of agreement. If you are still dissatisfied, contact the Bureau of Weights and Measures in Augusta (289-2752). If your problem involves the quantity or quality of wood, you may be able to file a complaint with the Consumer and Antitrust Division, Attorney General's Office, Augusta (289-3716). To find out more about firewood, contact the *Office of Energy Resources* and ask for a copy of the booklet, "Consumer's Guide to Buying Firewood." *

Cartoon by Eric Bolio, 15
Bryant Pond, Maine



The Tallest Tree in Hanover
You once stood, tall tree,
like a chapel on this mountainside.
Your top branches swayed in the
Autumn mist,
as though searching for
immortality.
You were cut and sold for pulp.
Your stump now sets jagged,
sweating beads of pine sap
during hazy summer days.
I see a small seedling—
perhaps one of your offspring,
bending towards the sun.
I can only hope, old tree,
that the ground is moist enough
to nurture the seedling to
Maturity.

Rob Ferguson
Hanover

SMALL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF MAINE:

Voluntary Cooperation to Manage the Forests

by Duncan Howlett

Past President and Special Projects Director of SWOAM

Members of this pioneering organization get together to share forestry techniques, learn from each others' mistakes, and educate the people about woodland management.

People do not immediately grasp the special character of our association. It is not the typical state forestry organization—many of which are primarily supported (and often run) by the state bureau of forestry, a university extension system, the forest-products industry, or a combination of the three.

In Maine, the organization is quite an independent, cooperative venture. SWOAM (Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine) arose out of a specific need. We gathered for the first time nine years ago as citizen owners of small units of forestland. Knowing little or nothing about forestry, we were nevertheless aware of the potential for good or ill in cutting practices. Our common interest was a desire to know what silvicultural practices to apply, what cutting practices to follow, and how best to market the products of our work.

SWOAM members are of widely varying social and political backgrounds. Some are highly educated, some are not; some are well-to-do, more are not. Members are old and young, men and women, married and single. Most are industrious: some do their own logging, all oversee their own operations. Most importantly, all want to understand the basics of forest management for the small-woodland owner.

What is "small?" At our organizing meeting, we debated that question at length. In Maine, we found, the Bureau of Forestry had chosen 5,000 acres as the cutoff point, so we adopted that maximum—but we didn't write it into our constitution. We decided that *anyone*

Fifty small woodland owners met for the first time in 1975. Their common interest was a desire to know what silvicultural principles to apply, what cutting practices to follow, and how best to market the products of their work.

interested in "small" woodland ownership in Maine should be eligible to join. Thus, some of our members own little land or none at all. Dues are the same for everyone: \$10 annually. Each member has one vote—the college student with three acres and International Paper Company with one and one-quarter million. As things have turned out, the state's formula is correct. Our largest citizen landowner has about 5,000 acres. The median, however, ranges between 50 and 150 acres.

SWOAM originated in the simplest manner possible. When I spoke on behalf of the small woodland owner at a statewide forestry conference in 1975, I remarked that many people had expressed interest in such an organization, and I passed out cards asking for the names and addresses of those interested. Seventy-five people turned in cards, and

nearly fifty showed up at a meeting called soon after to consider the idea.

It became clear through open and extended discussion that we who were present had in common two basic needs: (1) reassurance that ordinary citizens largely ignorant of technical forestry could learn to manage their own woodland; and (2) a structure that could provide us with continuing access to such information.

Why was our sense of need so acute?

Many of us belonged to the Tree Farm System. Most of us had had assistance from our state service forester. Almost all of us had accumulated stacks of pamphlet literature produced for the amateur forester by the state and federal governments and various universities. Many of us had immersed ourselves in this material; some had even resorted to forestry textbooks.

But how to put it all together? How to get answers to the new questions that kept coming up as we learned more and more? This was what bothered us.

We could, of course, get answers from the state service foresters. However, the demand on these people far outran the supply of time they had to give. The demand was rising, but the supply of service hours was scarcely expanding at all. After one initial visit by the service forester, some people waited as long as a year or two before he had time to get back to them. Even then, the most time he could give them was three days. That was a lot in view of his schedule—but far too little for the neophyte in woodland management.



The Tree Farm people did better; but both services were often inadequate on another level: that of teaching. True, some private citizens have no real desire to learn the principles of small-forest management. They want their trees properly marked by an expert, sold on the stump for the highest price, the forest left in an improved condition—and that is all. They are very glad to leave the details to others.

Not so with just about everyone who shows up at SWOAM meetings. They want to get on top of the operation themselves.

They want to know what is going on and why. They want technical assistance, but they want to understand the reasons for the assistance they are getting. Service foresters vary greatly in this respect. So do Tree Farm agents. Some are natural-born teachers, and within the time they have they gladly explain everything they do. Others, working under pressure as they all do, provide the service needed and move on to the next assignment as quickly as possible. A few—and here I speak from personal experience—give the landowner the impression that forestry basics are really beyond him and he had best stop trying to understand.

A few of us—I among them—in addition to all our reading, enjoy the help of a consulting forester. This is the ideal setup. Norman Gray of Fryeburg has been with me ever since we acquired the forest, and he has been invaluable. He goes out of his way to help the owner understand what he is doing. "He thinks like a tree," someone once said, and you get that impression as you walk through the forest with him.

Proportionately, the cost of a consulting forester is not great, and in terms of return, you get back more than you spend. However, it requires an operation of some size in order to do this.

Then, too, there is a limit to the assistance that even the best consulting forester can provide. In my case, for example, the more Norman Gray told me, the more I wanted to know; and in the end, I, as a retiree, wound up at the School of Forest Resources, University of Maine. It was a rich experience and invaluable to me, but not available to

very many of us. However, perhaps inspired by SWOAM, Sandra MacGown—married to then-President Richard MacGown, became a full-time student at Maine's Forestry School.

An Organization to Help

For the amateur trying to grasp a few forestry basics as they apply to small-woodland management, there has to be a limit. Most of our members, busy with other things, want to learn all they can but are forced to content themselves with little more than the minimum required for the intelligent pursuit of their particular goals.

It was to help them that SWOAM was organized. We expected no miracle, and we certainly did not think that we had launched ourselves on the easy road to forest management. Instead, we were conscious of creating a mechanism through which we could acquire the knowledge we needed and through which that knowledge could be checked and updated for accuracy.

Our purpose and the means by which we proposed to implement them became clear because of the type of structure we built. SWOAM is a self-organized, self-supported association.

The subject matter, the character, the method of presentation of our programs are dictated by the desires and needs of the members. Out of these desires and needs, we became at the outset primarily an educational organization. Since that time, "education" has increasingly taken on a much broader meaning.

Originally it meant teaching ourselves how to manage our own woodlot. Today it also means educating the public about the desirability of small, private woodland ownerships, and about the benefits that accrue to the individual owner, to the forest economy of our state, to the environment, and to the social structure.

In our fourth year, a CETA grant provided us with an Executive Director—Douglas Schneider, a registered forester and a graduate of the School of Forest Resources at the University of Maine, as well as an administrative assistant. We were able to set up an office.

It was a short-lived arrangement, as we knew it would be. Such CETA grants were good for one year only (in our case

extended to eighteen months as a reward for good performance). But that year and a half made all the difference. During that time, through an extensive mail campaign and other efforts, we raised our signed-on paid membership above the 600 mark and developed a regular informative *Newsletter* upon which our membership placed a high value. When the grant ran out, we reverted to the volunteer status on which we still operate, but now we had sufficient income to rent an office.

We have six active regional chapters—their specific areas only roughly designated. Our members are urged to attend meetings whenever and wherever they can without regard to the particular chapter to which they may belong. In order of their formation, the chapters are: Down East, Upper Kennebec Valley, Western Maine, Mid-Coast, Southern Maine, and Penobscot Valley.

A second recent development of significance is the Parker Cruising Rod, copyrighted and on sale through the SWOAM office at \$10.00 each. It was developed by Dr. E. Parker Johnson, a retired professor of Psychology at Colby College, after he attempted to use the Biltmore Stick—long a staple instrument among foresters. Those who have tested it in the field find the Parker Rod very superior to its predecessor.

Maine Christmas Tree Association Model

An organization like ours does not come into existence out of the blue; it develops by analogy out of the experience of other groups. In our case, the model was the Maine Christmas Tree Association.

In the spring of 1967, Norman Gray, my consulting forester, had on his own set out 750 balsam-fir seedlings in the hayfield behind the Howlett barn. "I thought you might like to have a forest crop you yourself could harvest," he said with a twinkle. With more work than we could handle already before us, we didn't think much of the idea, but his thinking was clear enough. In Maine today the forest rotation period from seedling to harvest is a minimum of 40 years (for birch only) and goes up to 60, 80, 100 years and more for other species.

That means if you start at or near retirement (as many small-woodland owners do), your children or grandchildren—not you—will harvest the forest you have been tending.

So, finding myself in the Christmas tree business, I joined the MCTA and began attending its summer meetings. They are held annually, out-of-doors on a member's Christmas tree plantation, and consist of a minimum of business and a maximum of on-the-ground learning about the growing and marketing of Christmas trees.

The MCTA example was implicit rather than explicit in the organizing of SWOAM. But we adopted a similar meeting principle, which is now nearly inflexible. We leave to the Executive Committee all but the most important matters of business and devote our time to instruction, observation, and demonstration in the forest. **Feet on the ground, hands on the trees** is our motto.

There is today in the Northeast—and probably throughout the country—great danger of serious depredation in small, privately-owned forestland through the indiscriminate cutting of firewood. A prime concern of SWOAM is to educate the public so that sound silvicultural principles should be applied by all small-woodland owners, whether members of our organization or not.

A central principle we insist upon in our membership is: **Firewood is not a product of good forest management. It is a byproduct.** If you own 10 acres or less, you have little choice but to manage the forest for firewood in order to get the most out of your woods. But for woodlands larger than that, cutting firewood is a needless and profligate waste of a prime natural resource. Trees cut for firewood should be of inferior form and of the least desirable species; those marked for cutting should be selected on that basis.

SWOAM's self-image is continuously expanding. We see ourselves now as primarily interested in the forest itself as it exists in small, privately-owned units. We want to see it maintained at its present level and expanded if possible—and managed in accordance with sound silvicultural principles.

We are now an exclusively charitable,



Above is the view from Duncan Howlett's front yard, including Christmas trees grown for sale.

educational, and scientific organization. As a direct result of our efforts, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service has greatly accelerated its forestry program. The Maine Forest Products Council, the Audubon Society, and two Resources Conservation and Development units in the state are sponsoring programs of the type SWOAM began to put on five years ago. We take no credit for these developments. All have occurred in response to the widespread demand by our citizenry for forest-management know-how. We can, however, claim to be pioneers in this movement.

Meanwhile, our activities continue to proliferate.

Perhaps the most important project SWOAM has yet undertaken is a plan now being developed whereby Consulting Foresters will be formally attached to each of the chapters. When the State cut back sharply on its Service Forester Program a year ago, it was thought that SWOAM should try to fill the gap for its members by adding one or more Registered Foresters to its staff. That proposal, after extended study and thought, evolved into the Chapter Forester Plan,

the details of which are now being worked out to be published and implemented this year.

Though still very young, SWOAM is now a well-established organization with a growing membership and growing influence. It provides many services and benefits to its members, but increasingly it does so for non-members as well. Some 100,000 acres of Maine forest land are under present or projected management at the hands of SWOAM members. This represents not only a measurable portion of the raw produce of Maine's principal industry, it represents also an extended acreage of well-tended forest in areas under increasing urban pressure.

SWOAM encourages the purchase and long-term ownership of forest land—a policy from which everyone benefits. You are invited to join, whether or not you as yet have any woodland of your own.



This article is updated from a piece in American Forests, September, 1980. Turn the page for a profile of Duncan Howlett himself. Photos by Juanita Perkins.

THE GREAT ARBOR

Can you imagine the prestige that the town of Hartford, Maine, feels to have a nationally-recognized white birch tree? Of course, this tree had to have had "nine-lives" in order to have grown to the astronomical circumference of eighteen feet one inch and the great height of ninety-three feet, with the astounding crown spread of sixty-five feet. By contrast, the average paper birch tree has a circumference of one to two feet, the height of fifty to seventy feet, and takes approximately twelve to fifteen years to grow.

Certainly, with the International Paper Company, the largest paper mill in the United States, located only a mere twenty miles from this privately-owned forest on the Bittner Farm (called by older settlers the Ames Homestead), we are amazed that we have such a magnificent tree left to boast about.

Since the environment of Maine requires the need for wood for fuel, wood for paper, wood for furniture, and since there are fires and blow-downs, the chances against a tree surviving to achieve this size are infinite.

First of all, what do we know about a tree? Most of us cannot see a single tree due to the forest as the old cliché goes. A tree is considered the largest of all plants. People usually think of trees as living forever. Their buds and flowers are a sign of spring and their colorful leaves brighten every autumn.

Let's name our tree "LONGEVITY" and start as a seed leaving the parent tree. This seed will rest on the ground for a while; however water, air and sunshine help the seed germinate. The part of the seed that develops into the trunk points upward toward the sunlight. As the seed absorbs water, the root part swells and bursts through the seed's shell. As the root grows, it pushes down into the soil. The food stored in the seed nourishes the young tree and helps it grow. Gradually, the root begins to soak

up water from the soil, and at the same time the trunk begins to develop leaves. Now "Longevity" is recognized as a seedling.

As "Longevity's" trunk divides into spreading branches near the base of the crown it gives the crown a rounded shape. If "Longevity" has achieved six feet in height, she is now called a sapling.

The main job of the leaves is to make food for the tree. Water from the roots passes through the trunk, branches and leaves to use the water to make food sugar. The food made by the leaves is called sap.

In Hartford where "Longevity" is located, the winter is cold and "Longevity" loses her leaves in the autumn. "Longevity" rests during the winter months. With the coming of spring, she grows new leaves and flowers. The flowers grow into fruit which contain seeds for making new trees. Some tree fruits are edible; however I know of no dish that we serve the birch fruit in.

Page 37 . . .



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If there were an award for eclectic mastery in both human affairs and in the natural environment, Duncan Howlett would certainly earn that distinction. One can't help but absorb an energy force that emanates around him and his farm. Even the drive into Center Lovell, Maine, where Howlett and his wife, Dr. Carolyn Howlett, live is a gradual catharsis from the assault and pressure of daily living. The soothing balm and presence of forests, lakes, streams and mountains begin to create not only a tranquil spirit within one, but a healthful vigor also.

Turning into their long, sloping, tree-lined drive, you begin to feel the combined power of leaf, blade of grass, bird song and light. Beyond the trees, on both sides, stretch 35 acres of fields and meadows limned by stone walls and partially embraced toward the west by a series of mountain ranges which gradually culminate in the Presidentials. 5,000 Christmas trees are nurtured in the fields to the left and beyond; yet, it is in the simplicity of the land's elemental character and the clarity of light that one is subtly impressed with appreciative wonder for the total ambience of the place.

The Howletts purchased the first part of their property in 1949, coming up for summers until July of 1969, when they decided to reside in the area permanently. Formerly known as the Old Town Farm, it was built in 1825 by Joseph Barker, son of John Barker of Fryeburg.

The Howletts have been in the process of completely restoring all of the buildings on their grounds. The latest structure to receive their attention and restorative care is a building first built to be used as a "shook"* shop in which wooden barrels were made from the abundant white oak forests that densely populated the area at one time. The Barkers would ship the parts for each Maine white oak barrel to Jamaica where they were assembled, filled with rum, aged, and eventually shipped to various ports around the world.

"When the white oak forests were all used up, the major economical reason for the farm's existence was gone, also," Howlett said. "Apparently, the climate

has changed because white oak no longer grows here in single stands, let alone whole forests. Their northernmost range seems to extend to Brownfield."

The Barkers turned to farming after their first industry's resources were

With An Open Heart & Spirit

The Life of
Duncan Howlett
by Keith Carreiro



depleted, but to no avail. "Son Elden went west after the Civil War," Howlett continued, "and in 1866 the farm was taken over by the town, becoming known as the 'Town Farm'."

Despite the decline of the once dominant white oak trees, the farm now has an abundant variety of conifers and deciduous trees. Their beauty and well-managed care have not gone unnoticed, or unrewarded. Citations, awards and honors have been equally harvested by Howlett from the Society of American Foresters, Natural Resources Council,

National Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy, Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, Forest History Society, American Forestry Association.

Serving as a member, director, or president of many of these listed organizations (and others), Howlett seems to have sunk his own roots deeply within the Maine soil. "I've always been fond of the natural world," he said. "It was in the early '60's that I learned a next-door neighbor's farm was going up for sale. I went over and talked with them to express my interest, and thus, purchased their property. I kept 100 acres of forest land and re-sold the farm house. I then petitioned the town for the narrow wedge of property that was between mine and this newly bought woodland. The town granted my request; and, I guess it was then that the story got around that the Howletts were interested in forests."

His academic record is impressive: three bachelor degrees and two doctorates. He earned his first SB (Bachelor of Science) in 1928 from Harvard. A LLB (Bachelor of Laws) came three years afterward from Harvard, with the following two years spent as an attorney in Massachusetts. "After a false start of five years into law, I came to my senses," he said. "It takes time for one to find out who one really is. Law was good to me because I had an opportunity to witness the suffering and abuse that people undergo and experience. A lawyer works in an adversarial framework, but I found that my instincts were another way.

"One lawyer threatened to disbar me in a divorce case," he continued, "because he thought I was trying to steal his client away from him. I discovered myself counseling the couple to stay together, rather than expediting their legal separation. I found that I was put together as a minister—I needed to act like one."

Over the next three years he went back to Harvard, studying at the Divinity School and receiving his third degree (STB, Bachelor of Sacred Theology) in 1936. Along the way, he served his first pastorate in Salem, Massachusetts, at the Second Church, Unitarian from 1934-1938. He was ordained in Salem on November 17, 1935.

Three more pastorates followed,

stretching over the next 30 years from 1938 to 1968, respectively served in New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts, with his last work at All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, D.C. His two (honorary) doctorates were given to him in 1957 at Emerson College in Boston (LLD, Doctor of Laws), and in 1958 at Meadville Theological School of Lombard College in Chicago (DD, Doctor of Divinity).

Howlett calls his ministerial and personal, spiritual perspectives unified and "...very broad and very open." He recognizes the need for denominations, but strongly believes "they ought to draw together rather than divide. The National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, for example, operate on a doctrinal basis and divide people into theological categories.

"Essentially," he further explained, "I take a broad view of doctrine, polity and participation. I believe that lay people should play an important and integral part in church, and in the decision-

making processes that are vital to church activities. I fight for, and preach for, human decency, caring and dealing with one another within those beliefs. I try to heal the aching heart and to generate feelings of loving-kindness and cooperation. Each individual is an entity unto himself. Each person should be allowed to work out their consciousness as a center of human thought and religious nature."

Howlett's major denominational posts are equally impressive: Secretary-Treasurer of the Unitarian Ministerial Union, 1938-40; Commissioner to Poland, Unitarian Service Committee, August 1939; and, a member of four national committees and boards, in addition to being chairman of five and president of two.

His social activism was primed and ready for the social turmoil of the 1960's. From 1962-65 he chaired the Washington, D.C. Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Of that time he said, "The '60's were characterized by a great deal of self-righteousness. Too often there was really no open exchange of views. Many activists did not seem to want to be conciliatory or open-minded; and, instead of working together they tried to 'do their own thing'."

Howlett's methods of inquiry and relating with others are steeped in a philosophical statement which succinctly expresses his own open-mindedness and personal flexibility: "I don't think I 'know,' but I may be able to find out if I listen."

Asked where his deeply resided commitment and desire for service originate, he refers to his parents and paternal grandmother. "They were strong, high-minded people who were neither fatuous, nor sanctimonious. They treated me with respect and love. Being true teachers, not authoritarians, they drew me forward, instilling me with high ideals and tapping my inner motivation."

"They held me to my best," he continued, "because you can never do anything quite well enough. What they said made sense then, and still does now. The goal was to do the best you can with kindness, assistance and care. They taught me to formulate my plans and dreams, get going to accomplish them,

and to take the world as you find it. Things don't come easily, and if one is in too much of a hurry, bitterness and failure result."

Also manifest within Howlett is his deep respect and love for his wife, Dr. Carolyn Howlett. The day after this interview with him saw her leaving for a religious conference in Japan. A seasoned traveler, leader and humanitarian, she was from 1969-1979 president of the International Association of Liberal Religious Women; and, from 1978-1981 president of the International Association for Religious Freedom. The IARF is an organization comparable to the World Council of Churches, except that it is smaller and embraces various world religions.

Called out of retirement twice to be interim minister for the Unitarian Churches in Atlanta, Georgia, and Westport, Connecticut, Duncan Howlett's "...sheer delight in watching the results of planning and hard work" is similarly extended to his writings. A prolific author, his literary efforts have reaped him international attention and respect. Five major works have been produced by him in the last 30 years: *Man Against the Church*, *The Essenes and Christianity*, *The Fourth American Faith*, *No Greater Love*, and *The Critical Way in Religion*. Of his writing he says, "I try to use the English language to communicate, not obscure. Religion is anchored in the past while we are living in the future. I write and discuss this condition along with life's problems and challenges."

"I have tried to put my back into my work, wherever I've gone and in whatever I did," he said. His call for righteousness and commitment are clearly evidenced with everything that he has touched. As with his family, friends, writings, sermons, social activism, ministerial responsibilities, forestry and land conservation use, his farm and gardens, convictions and beliefs, he has had the miracle and opportunity to watch them grow, blossom and partake in the rich abundance of their harvests.

Indeed, the expanse of his vision and the hope of his purpose are evident in one of his statements in accepting the Unitarian Universalist Churches'

Page 38...

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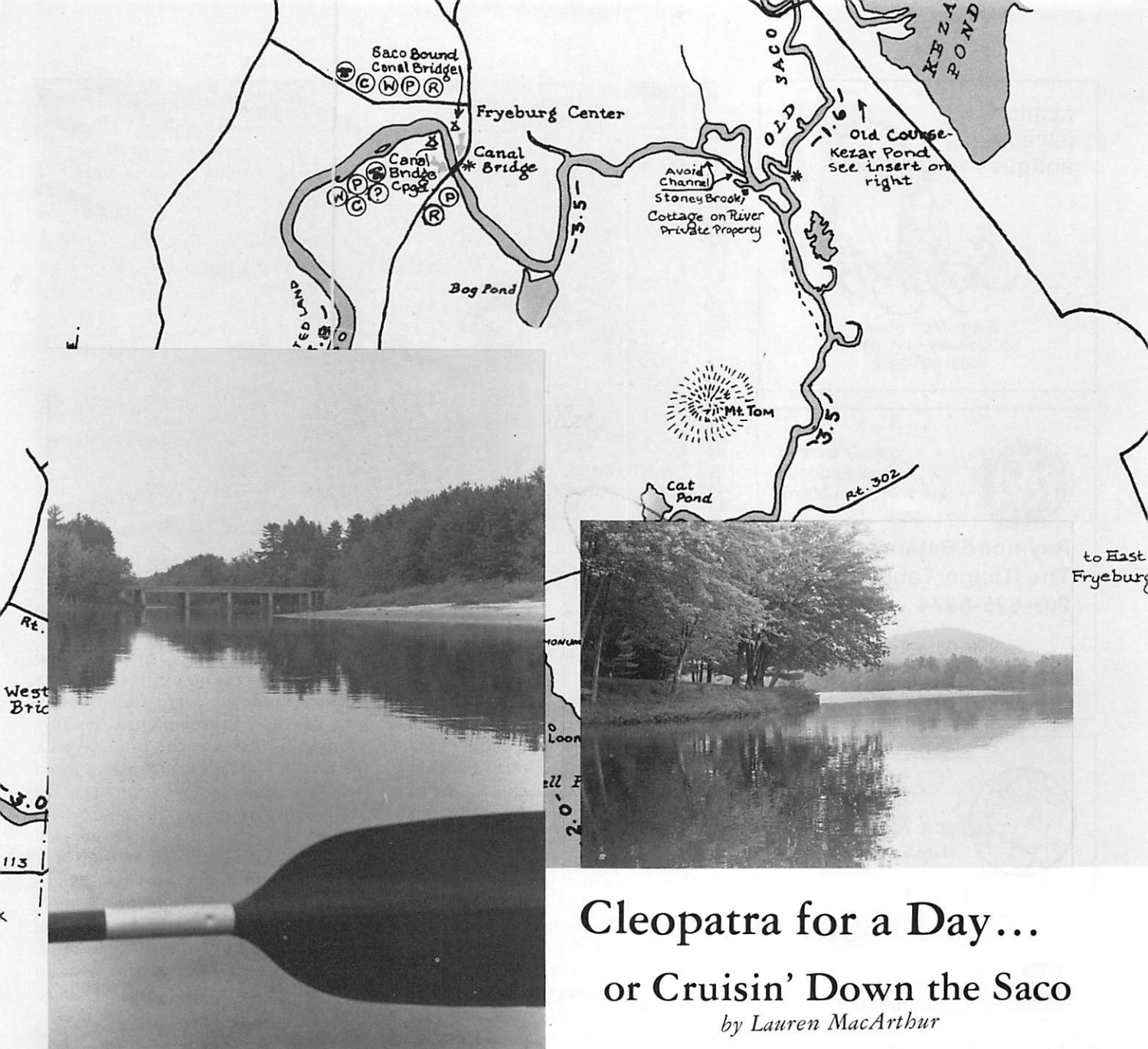
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Cleopatra for a Day... or Cruisin' Down the Saco

by Lauren MacArthur

Cruisin' down the river on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, (etc.) afternoon—or morning—or anytime for that matter, is a wonderful experience. Each year, more individuals, couples, and families are discovering the tranquil pleasures offered by a leisurely canoe trip down our nation's rivers and streams.

The Saco River, whose headwaters break from Saco Pond at Crawford Notch in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, winds approximately 125 miles—through the Conways of New Hampshire, across the state line into

Fryeburg, Maine, and down through such villages as Brownfield, Hiram, and Steep Falls—before it empties into the ocean below Saco.

The Saco is the most popular river east of the Mississippi for canoeing enthusiasts. It is not unusual, during the height of the season, for 800 or more canoes to be traversing a short span of the river from Swan's Falls to Walker's Bridge—about twelve miles. This is the stretch I travelled recently.

Fred and Prudy Westerberg of Saco River Canoe and Kayak, Fryeburg,

invited me and a friend, Craig Goodwin, to experience the serenity of a canoe trip down river.

I was Cleopatra for a day cruising down my mini-Nile. Our guide, Bob Tara—a burly Grizzly-Adams type who looks like he could eat you alive but is soft-spoken and as gentle as a lamb—took his paddle and seat at the rear. Craig took the other paddle and his seat at the front. That left the middle of the canoe and no paddle for me.

As the men paddled away, I had the tough job of shooting pictures and

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observing all the sights and sounds of nature around me. The only thing I, as Cleopatra, was missing, was a canopy overhead. I instructed the paddlers to make sure we didn't forget that next time.

We took our trip late one morning, early in June. And our day for cruisin'—a Thursday—turned out to offer it all. We started out under sunny skies that gradually became cloudy, heard the roll of threatening thunder, observed a water mist usually reserved for early morning, and got caught in a downpour a few hundred yards from our destination.

And we'd do it all again. As a matter of fact, we are doing it again...and again.

Bob introduced us to the river, its wildlife and the characteristics which make it the most popular canoeing river in the east: its flatness (hardly a ripple) and the fact that in summer one can walk across most of it; the wilderness feeling; the quietness. All one can hear are the birds chattering (one was quite noisy—giving orders somewhere) and all one can see are the cows grazing in some farmer's pasture giving us the once over.

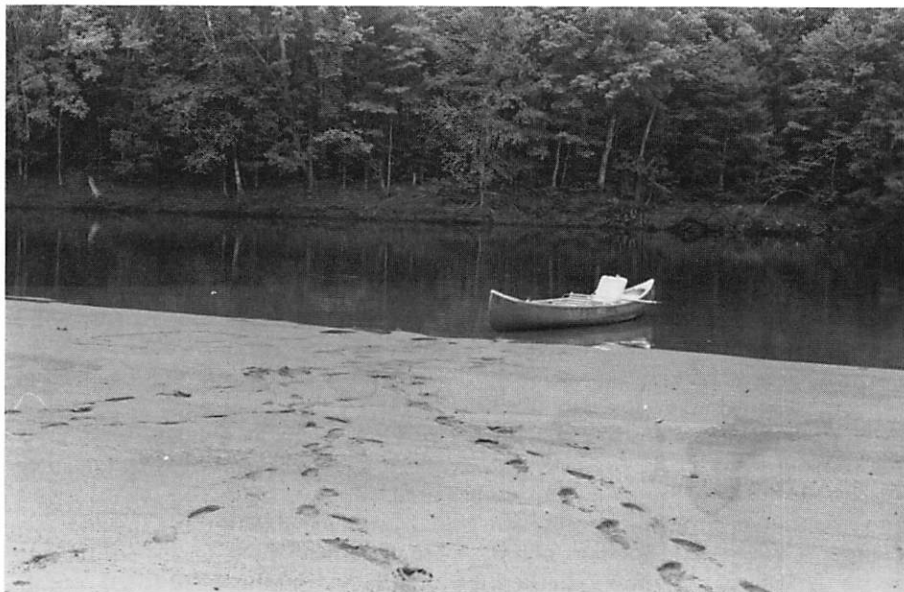
It took us about three hours, paddling at an easy pace (so the fellows told me) and stopping twice (once for a cool drink and a second time for a wonderful lunch of ham and cheese sandwiches, fruit and scrumptious chocolate cookies Prudy made that morning for us), to complete the 12-mile trip. One should

allow approximately 20 minutes per mile in spring and early summer and 30 minutes per mile in late summer and fall.

We took one side trip into Bog Pond (there are several one may take). What a feeling! Complete peace. Pine trees all around—no houses, no boats, no anything—just us! And the time we took getting to Walker's Bridge also allowed for a 15-20 minute stopover under a tree during the downpour.

Canoeing the Saco can be enjoyed three out of the four seasons; from May to October the water is inviting. High-water canoeing during the spring runoff can be enjoyed by the adventuresome. Summertime finds the river peaceful, safe, and serene—yet exciting! And in autumn, as Fred says, "see the foliage





*Above, footsteps in the sand.
Below, Bob Tara.*



from a canoe." The breathtaking patchwork of fall colors enjoyed at the leisurely pace of a canoe defy description. Do not forget your camera.

Up to 50 miles of canoeing can be enjoyed on the Saco without a portage. Miles of sand-covered beaches are available for overnight camping, picnic lunches, swimming fun—or simply sunning. Fire permits are required but are available free.

At the end of our trip, Craig and I were so relaxed we didn't even want to move. It seemed like too much effort to rejoin the hustling, bustling world. Of course, Craig hadn't paddled a canoe in years. That could explain his feeling of inertia.

But we both hung back, talking with Bob, Prudy and Fred, unwilling to step back into the twentieth century until we absolutely must.



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Rte. 117, Norway Lake, ME
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... The Great Arbor

The roots are necessary to anchor "Longevity" in the ground and absorb water with dissolved minerals from the soil.

The birch is classified in the broadleaf tree group and are the most numerous and varied of the world's trees. It makes sense that this group would have broad, flat leaves and in addition are called deciduous—that is they lose their leaves each autumn. Foresters call broadleaf trees hardwood due to the tough, hard wood they have for their composition.

Trees also make new wood each year when the weather turns warmer. This is how the annual rings develop each year. Counting the rings indicates its age and reveals the tree's life story. Narrow center rings indicate that other trees shaded the young tree, depriving it of moisture and sunlight; a "V" marking indicates a branch grew at this point; a scar indicates fire damage; wider rings indicate that surrounding trees had been removed, giving the tree more moisture and sunlight. Also, rainfall from year to year can be determined by the differences in the rings.



1981 - Lorraine Greig sitting on branch of Birch Tree located in Hartford, Maine.

This tree, "Longevity" was first noted by Wilbur Libby in 1979 and information sent to the Maine Forestry Department in Augusta, Maine. After being verified by all the proper authorities it is now on the "Big Tree List."

Please do not trespass on the property without the permission of Mr. Bittner.

*Lorraine Leighton Greig
Hartford*

she thought. Somehow, he had a beneficial effect on her.

She didn't mind waiting for him that evening. It seemed proper that she should sit idly dreaming—perhaps even dozing—until he arrived. She was sure he would come.

And so he did, a bit earlier than usual, and with such eagerness that he began to speak even before he became visible.

"Let me tell you about last night," the voice said, while Tommy circled around the turbulent air. "Ah, good evening, Tommy! But please, do not ask questions." He looked down at his unfinished figure. "It seems to take so long tonight. I did not leave voluntarily. Indeed, I fought to remain —"

"Then — ?"

"No, do not ask. I am afraid it might happen again, and I must remain at least long enough to explain." He gave a short laugh. "All these years I have been haunting, yet it seems there still are some things I must learn."

He sat in his chair, and Tommy sat on the arm near him.

"You see, until last night there never had been any conflict between my thoughts and my desires. Evidently desires, leftovers from the flesh, are weaker, because when I wished to stay last night I departed. You remember, you asked me —" he hesitated, and continued hurriedly "— about a certain place. In an effort to describe it to you I had to think of it, and when I thought of it, I went there!"

He sat back and laughed, and after a moment Matilda laughed with him.

"This is what I learned. Wherever my thoughts go, I go. Therefore, if you wish me to stay, do not make me think of another place. But if at any time you should want me to leave, just ask again your question of last night, and I shall be gone."

He seemed in an unusually jolly mood. Matilda gave herself credit for having a good effect on him, and quickly dismissed the thought, hoping he hadn't noticed. Then that thought was replaced by one much more distressing. As if she had become a battleground, part of her fought against the thought while another tried to clarify it and put it into words.

"Colonel Barrett —"

"Dear lady, I should be most honored

if you would call me Angus."

"Very well. But then instead of dear lady, you must call me Matilda."

"Indeed yes. Matilda. A lovely name. Matilda. It goes well with Angus, does it not? Oh, ma'am, I beg your pardon! Being allowed to come here like this has really made me quite giddy."

Matilda wasn't listening.

"Angus," she said, taking up her knitting and staring hard at it, as if hunting for a dropped stitch. "Where do you go when you are—set free?"

There was a terrible silence in which her heart pounded wildly. She clutched the knitting tight in her hands, tears smarting in her eyes. She didn't look up, didn't want to see him go. "Always," she thought, "I will have the memory of him sitting in that chair, happy to be here, happy to be with me, and that is something I must treasure."

Tommy jumped up on the sofa and sat beside her. Then close by a voice spoke.

"Dearest, dearest Matilda! No, your question could not set me free, because I have no knowledge of that place. I cannot visualize it, so cannot think of it. I can only long to be there."

"Oh, I'm so glad! No, I don't mean that. But I was so afraid —"

"Nevertheless, Matilda, you have set me free."

She brushed away the tears and looked up in bewilderment. He was standing over her, smiling down at her.

"I have done my good deed, Matilda. I was not aware of it and you were not aware of it, and that is the way a good deed should be performed, without consciousness of either the giving or the receiving. My being here has made you happy, has it not?"

"Oh yes! Happier than I've ever been."

"That is what has given me my freedom. I am profoundly grateful."

Suddenly a turmoil of joy and fear tore through her entire body.

"But you haven't left. You are still here."

"Yes, Matilda."

He seemed to be asking a question. Her heart pounded, asking the same question. Her fear increased and her joy increased, until it seemed her body no longer could contain them.

"Angus, I can't breathe!"

"Do not try. There is no need. Come, give me your hand."

He touched her, and smoothly she slid off the sofa to stand beside him.

"Oh, Angus, how wonderful! It's like getting rid of something that's been too tight." She laughed. "Like taking off a tight girdle. I feel so —"

"Free," Angus said. "Come, Matilda."

"Yes, Angus. Oh, no, Angus, no! I must go back. Tommy!"

Gently he stopped her head from turning.

"Do not look back. Look ahead. Look there. He has been waiting for some time."

Tommy had left the sofa and was standing near the door, his tail flicking in anticipation, his head tilted coquettishly, the old impish look of kittenhood in his eyes.

"Oh dear!" Matilda shook her head. "Poor Paul! He gave me his word of honor he'd come without fail to fix that faucet in the morning. I do hope he hasn't mislaid his pass key... All right, Tommy, we're coming."

Era Zistel lives in the Catskill Mountains in Haines Falls, New York. She has written a number of books for children, including *Orphan*, *Thistle* and *The Golden Book of Cat Stories*. Articles by Era Zistel have appeared in *McCalls*, *Saturday Evening Post* and *Reader's Digest*.

... Duncan Howlett

Distinguished Service Award at Ohio State University this past June:

"The doctrine of freedom does not reduce us to silence. Freedom is not a dogma, it is a commitment to a way of doing what we do. It is a commitment to holding whatever convictions we have with a mind open to change, with a heart open to people of every sort, with an imagination open to new concepts, and a spirit open to ever wider vistas of knowledge and inspiration."

Keith Carreiro is a free-lance writer, a teacher, and a stunning guitarist who is leaving his home in Sweden, Maine, this fall for further education in Massachusetts.

... BitterSweet Views

as good as it could be, though, by all means seek more education. Every writer needs an editor (me, too). And, as always, read, read, read good authors.

Good News/Bad News Department

The Good news is that we are going to add two issues: once again, BitterSweet will be a *twelve-issue*, monthly magazine! The Bad news is, we must learn to spell *Kearsarge*, New Hampshire (see August). We're sorry!

Other Writers/Other Places

On page 4, you will see some wonderful George French photographs of two authors' birthplaces. On the left is that of Longfellow, mentioned in Jack Barnes' article in our June issue. The Portland landmark is gone now. On the right is John Greenleaf Whittier's Haverhill, Massachusetts, birthplace, as mentioned in Barnes' article about Whittier's poem "Maud Muller" on page 15. These were interesting additions to our text, discovered in the files at the French residence in Kezar Falls.

To close on a humorous note, I would like to share with you the handbill put out by Herbert Adams and Bill Wood on the occasion of the 150th birthday of "Artemus Ward" (Charles Farrar Browne) in Waterford this past summer. A recollection of the kind of tongue-in-cheek wit for which Brown was famous in his writings and lectures, it cheered everyone who saw it.

ARTEMUS WARD DELIVERED LECTURES (the flyer trumpets) BEFORE ALL THE CROWNED HEADS OF EUROPE...ever thought of delivering lectures. The Rules of the House include this: *Children in arms not admitted if the Arms are loaded...* and: *Mr. Ward will not be responsible for any debts of his own contracting.* Bill Wood has translated Artemus Wardisms into the 20th Century all summer with his show, "What We Don't Tell The Tourists," presented at the Artemus Ward House—a bed & breakfast, afternoon tea facility in Waterford, Maine. The world needs more genuine wit.

Happy writing.

Nancy Marcotte



... Ayah

and West Baldwin. The privilege of coming to know Raymond Cotton, that gracious town historian, faithful town clerk for many years, and dedicated store owner of early settler fame, has been mine. With great anticipation I read his August essay in your truly beautiful magazine.

I cannot offer a better explanation to the matter and gladly accept his explanation of the rapid transport of the tragic news of the Willey House disaster. I recall going on an expedition of fire-fighting some three decades ago on the opposite side of the mountain chain (all able-bodied men were to go) and heard the guide of the group saying not even the Indians had walked our way as we broke path to the mountain top. A hundred years before our path-breaking work, even more courageous and compassionate people accepted the challenge of spreading the newsworthy word for sympathy and warning.

Credit goes to your magazine for offering the story by our revered Hiram historian. It is a reflection of how simple matters can be reported with good taste and affection. We thank your paper, which we have been accustomed to picking up in the lovely old village store of Mr. Cotton.

Dr. Kalman L. Sulyok
West Baldwin, ME

AUGUST CAN YOU PLACE IT?

The two pictures were taken on the main street of North Conway. The old hotel was the Kearsarge built in 1872 and located just south of the RR Station and front of the golf clubhouse. It burned in 1915. The smaller building was the North Conway Academy on the site of the present community house. It offered instruction in French, German, Italian, and Spanish languages and lectures on chemistry and natural philosophy. Your upper picture shows the Kearsarge tower and behind that Cathedral ledge. The above information from a booklet published by Saco Valley Printing of Fryeburg, copyright 1969.

I have been buying BitterSweet at Porter's Store in Porter, Me., lately and am including my subscription with this letter.

Joseph A. Bolster
Easton, MA

Ed. Note: Mrs. Charles Seavey of North Conway also identified the locale. Helen Nute, who loaned the pictures, informs us that the Academy building was secretly removed one night and carried away to an unknown location!



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... Fiddlers Play

The preserving agent for traditional music has been cultural isolation, a fact of life in pockets all along the Appalachian Range. While the South has been promoted in the pop/country western field by the commercial bonanza of the Grand Ole Opry, researchers have found as many extant versions of folk songs in rural New England. The legacy of nineteenth century European immigration

added multi-national songs to the American score. In the north country, we host the lively French fiddling tradition which crossed the borders from Quebec during the textile boom.

This musical inheritance is perpetuated today by the itinerant fiddlers, a calling that has changed concert violinist Andy Johnson into a rover from New Hampshire. Champion of the Rangeley contest, Andy prefers fiddling to playing in symphonies. He easily identifies with the hand-clapping camaraderie of fiddling contests and the kindred spirit old time music evokes. Wherever fiddlers convene, impromptu action from the audience is guaranteed: older couples waltz along the sidelines, clog dancers hop onstage, elfin men do hornpipes and jigs, and across the crowd graceful mothers delight their children by dancing to the lilting music of homelands.

An old tale still circulates about a mystery fiddler who enters a small contest, plays brilliantly, then disappears without a trace. He is a mythic character, a symbol for the once important, yet anonymous minstrels. They were the first real country musicians, roaming to entertain the lonely and to spread the news of the day chronicled within their songs. The master fiddlers circuiting the contests today are of this mold, dedicated to transforming the uninitiated into fiddling devotees. Champions in a genre that is nearing extinction as surely as our rural landscapes are vanishing, these fiddlers cherish our folkways and are making a conscious effort that the music might continue. For them, fiddling harbors an essential philosophy as well as a vehicle for maintaining our national identity in a spiraling, modern, technocratic lifestyle.

To this end, gypsies like Ann Woodbury and Andy Johnson visit home only sporadically, spending their life's time on the road with a backpack and a violin case to carry their message. In light of modern media, the role of bard as news-person may be obsolete, but the minstrel is still alive.

Cathy Lee Morris lives in an unorganized territory in Maine.

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George French Photo

A Sportsman's Diary

by *Emery A. Santerre, Sr.*

GOIN' SHOOTIN'

October 15

'Tis October and isn't it grand? To a Downeast shotgunner, it's the best month of the year.

Did you other woodcockers have the same experience I had that first day? The heavy leaf-cover was to be expected, but how about that howling wind? The shrieking wind drowned the wing-beats of the woodcock on the rise, and danced the leaves, shadows, highlights wildly about. Most of my frustrated efforts resulted in a belated charge of No. 8 shot tearing a hole through the leaves at the exact spot where a woodcock had just been! But a dog on point, the "bark" of a shotgun, the color, etc., etc., more than made up for the light bag...

The partridge, still under the law's benevolent protection, looked like comparatively big, slow, easy marks those first few days of woodcock season. It was surprising how much speed they had acquired by the time they became legal targets.

Day-break on the first day found us out Charlotte-way, where we joined the

fun in opening the pheasant season. There was much gunblasting! A long-tailed cock-pheasant cackling his way out of a weedy thicket is really something to see! And when you "spank 'em," don't they come down hard! Quite a mouthful for a dog to retrieve, too, aren't they?

One day, we went duckhunting on the St. Croix with an excited youngster and a very bored bird dog. Did very well, thank you. Got our limit of ducks and three bonus treats!

First, in the rainy sunrise, as we were drifting down the river, out of nowhere on the Maine shore a big buck bounced out, headed for Canada in a hurry. He sure made the water fly! He was silhouetted boldly against the glare on the water—his antlers stuck out like the proverbial rocking chair! What a sight!

Then, during a lull in the shooting, as we were half-asleep in the blind, we were roused by a raucous commotion! A bunch of crows were giving a bald eagle a rough time. They dove and attacked from every angle, cleverly avoiding his angry snapping beak and clutching talons. Later we noticed something moving along the river bank, headed toward us. As "it" got closer, we discovered the "something" was a mother racoon and two youngsters. Very interesting to watch, as they scrambled over rocks and logs searching for and finding bits of

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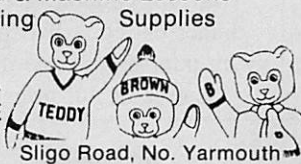
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food, which they would hurriedly wash with their little "hands" before eating. They were quite close to us before "mama" coon got a hint of our scent. She stood up on her hind feet, nose pointed straight up in the air, until she got the message. Then she quickly scrambled, with her carefree young-uns following unquestioningly after her.

By now a lot of the leaves have fallen. It's much easier for a slowed down old-timer to swing on a bird and maybe flatten him, if he doesn't zig or zag as the trigger is pulled! These hot-rodding

jet-age birds get harder to hit with each successive year, but the ones that do find their way into my game pocket are appreciated all the more.

As it says here in Section 91 of the *Book*: "North and East of a line beginning on Route 201 etc., etc., etc." and ends up running "thence easterly along Route 6 to the Canadian border." Our neighbors are already allowed to chase the white tails. Day after tomorrow I intend to join them—would be tomorrow but hope to keep a date with a bunch of Blacks on the Grand Falls Flowage.

'Tis October, and isn't it j-u-s-t grand?

Vivian Santerre of Saco, Maine, contributed her late husband's sports writings.



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Notes From Brookfield Farm

by Jack Barnes

*O bushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall.*

If I may take the liberty to substitute "evening" for "morning" in the opening line of Robert Frost's poem, it would describe so perfectly this lovely, crisp evening in early October.

I have just come from gathering cranberries; and, except for the grapes which still cling tenaciously to the vines over the stonewall by the corner of our bedroom (and those down in the interval enveloping a rustic arbor that is in somewhat critical condition), I am done with the gathering of fruit. Let the birds and the squirrels savor what is left; I have had my share.

There is no need for one to be greedy. There are plenty of cranberries which Diana has packaged and frozen to be thawed out come Thanksgiving and Christmas—or just about any time that we have a leg of lamb or turkey, all of which are products of Brookfield Farm.

I am sitting here in my study writing down my October thoughts. Perhaps I should call them my cranberry thoughts, for the silence of the cranberry bog was a catalyst for several trains of thought which went spiraling off in different channels, only to converge as I walked homeward along a sylvan trail. Filigrees of gold and silver tumbled over moss-covered rocks, and the smell of cranberries and damp leaves still lingered on my hands and clothes. I have not as yet performed the nightly ablution for fear that my meditations would be washed away as a message written in the sand is erased by a surging wave.

I first thought about the time so many years ago when I was a small boy and what now constitutes Brookfield Farm was owned by others who probably loved this land as much as I. It was my uncle, my father's brother, who first brought me to my favorite cranberrying place where the berries grow big and red. "Pick in silence" is what he taught me, because only then can one train his auditory system to record the various messages which Nature transmits in early October. This has proved to be a very valuable lesson for me in life, and I am certain that much of my sensitivity to nature stems from that one token of wisdom.

"Stay in one place and pick clean instead of trampling on more than you pick" is another of my uncle's imperatives that has made an indelible impression upon me; and I have passed these words of wisdom on to my own sons with an amendment in the form of a metaphor: "Don't trample on others to get what you want in life."

There are those, of course, who would scoff at such a parable. "You're not being a realist" or "That's not what the real world is all about," are typical admonishments that one such as I can expect to hear from those who claim to be worldly.

But my response is: "Come spend some time in my world. Come cranberrying with me. Become aware of the harmony that is constantly but subtly revolving in this microcosm called Brookfield Farm. What you see and what we have to share was not gained by trampling asunder either cranberries, animals, or humans."

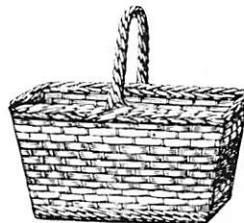
Oh, I have ventured out into this great world from time to time—journeyed around it more than once—before and after the founding of our Brookfield Farm. I have tasted of the bitter and the sweet, seen the pragmatists climbing up and over the backs of others to reach some pinnacle or other. Furthermore, I

have seen them come crashing down, beaten and demoralized. Often I have seen them helped up by those whom they previously had attempted to trample to get to wherever it was they thought they were going.

No, the real world is what one wishes to make it, and each time Diana and I return to Brookfield Farm from a lengthy trek to some far corner of the universe, we are thankful for what we have. That includes the cranberry bog.

This journal was begun with two lines from a poet whose works I so greatly admire and who, I regret, I never met. He took leave of this earth a few months after the falling of the crimson leaves of October, more than twenty years ago. Now it will be concluded with a few lines from "October Love" by Jesse Stuart, who shared with Diana and me his home at W-Hollow in his beloved Kentucky, where the Octobers are much like ours. Jesse Stuart was a part of my cranberry thoughts; and I would that he and his wife Niomi Dean could have been gathering one of the last of the October fruits with me, for tonight there is frost in the air. Soon, all too soon, our lovely autumn will be no more.

*I weep to think that autumn will
be over
When winds have rained the beech
leaves from the tree;
When mountain pools are under
silent cover
And winter takes my autumn love
from me.*



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A MEMORY MADE WITH THE GRATITUDE OF FRIENDS

Eras pass. If they leave a mark on the present, it is because someone has made a record. Our pages are filled with records. Photographs and narratives written from long memories are the forms we usually use, but sometimes an era is so poignant that its participants are moved to remember it in a very personal way. The quilt pictured here is such a record. It is the work of two Cornish craftswomen, Lois Whitney and Cheryl Hevey. The quilt embodies the pattern of friendship Lois and Cheryl had woven with their friends, George and Judy Moneyhun. The Moneyhuns, past proprietors of the Cornish Country Inn and responsible for the continued life of this magazine, had helped the two craftswomen start their needlework business by sharing part of their own fledgling enterprise. A front showroom in the inn was exchanged for help with the round-the-clock details of innkeeping. The space and hours traded were hardly counted as gratitude and loyalty evened the balance.

Together the friends weathered the ups and downs of new businesses and supported one another through the lesser and

greater tragedies of family life. And when changed circumstances broke the pattern, Lois and Cheryl said with the quilt all the sentiments words could never express.

The design remembers the Cornish Country Inn of the Moneyhun era. Judy's lamp in the second floor window, which became a community beacon, is there. So is George's dog, Penny, who patrolled the village with the same insouciance that had carried her unscathed through her pre-Moneyhun life on the streets of New York City. Tanja and Christian, the Moneyhun children, are there, and the signs of the two businesses. Panels

above and below the inn picture special events of family and village life.

Former Cornish postmaster, O. B. Denison, took this photograph of the quilt, displayed as it was presented to Judy Moneyhun on the night of her going away party. We offer it here in memory of the era it records and of the deep debt of gratitude we at BitterSweet owe George, whose life too soon ended, and Judy, whose love and strength still buoys us.

—S.G.



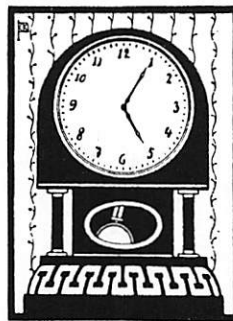


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